Polyhedron

NEWSZINE

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104

RPGA

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Notes from HQ

Many things have happened over the past year, some more memorable than others. But all of us here at HQ are happy with the Tournament program. We all seem to have survived the summer, weathered the storm of the GEN CON® Game Fair, and now look forward to another year of conventions. But change is inevitable, and the Tournament Program is ready for some more changes.

Living Campaigns

The WINTER FANTASY™ convention will be special this year because of the introduction of the Living Jungle campaign, which joins the Living City campaign for Network members across the country. Because of the sheer number of members currently involved in these campaign worlds, there will be some changes in the way HQ supports these settings.

At a recent convention, Jean noticed something disturbing with a group of players preparing for a Living City event. One of the players was transferring his character to a new character sheet supplied to the convention by HQ. Each time the member made a mistake while attempting to copy the character, he just crumpled up the old sheet and tossed it away. Upon Jean's return from the convention, it was decided a change was in order.

Beginning with the WINTER FANTASY Convention this February, all must pay for Living Campaign character sheets. They may sell them at the same price or photocopy the sheets for their attendants if they want them at their show. HQ can no longer afford to supply character sheets to players who use them in the manner described above. The price for conventions to purchase Living City or Living Jungle character sheets is:

1-10 sheets:	25¢ each
11-50 sheets:	15¢ each
50+ sheets:	10¢ each

Not to forget the individual LC or LJ players, HQ will be offering (following the printing of this issue) Living City and Living Jungle information packets which can be purchased for $5 each. These packets can be obtained by writing HQ or finding them at the GEN CON Game Fair and WINTER FANTASY Convention. The packets will include:

Living City Packet
- Living City Character Sheet
- Living City Writing Guidelines
- Knighthood Information
- Magic Trading Forms
- City Watch Information
- Informational Updates

Living Jungle Packet
- Living Jungle Character Sheet
- Living Jungle Tribes Information
- Living Jungle Writing Guidelines
- Living Jungle Races Information
- Informational Updates

Slot Zero

A slot zero allows convention coordinators an opportunity to recruit judges by letting them play in events (typically Living City) before the convention. Initially, HQ had no problem with conventions running slot zero events. However, some slot zero players have not been fulfilling their obligation by judging at conventions as promised.

This is bad news, not only for the convention coordinators, but also for convention attendees and HQ. Though the number of players abusing slot zero is low, the fact remains that playing in a slot zero event (typically run in the home of the convention organizer) is a privilege. As a result, all conventions must clear slot zero events with HQ first.

Judging Network Events

Related to the slot zero problem is the difficulty of finding judges for Network events across the country. Finding judges even for last year's Game Fair and WINTER FANTASY convention was extremely difficult. I would like to thank the members who rushed from the Network breakfast this past year to obtain a judging form for next year's show. But we still need more help.

HQ is tickled at the increase of Living City players over the past year, but herein lies the problem: everyone wants to play Living City, so few want to judge. A member recently pointed out to me that he often saw judging as a chore. But some of the most fun to be had at a convention is in judging.

Thus, I put another plea forth to the membership. If you plan to attend a convention, make it a point to judge one or two events in addition to whatever you wish to play. This will allow convention coordinators the opportunity to offer a wide variety of events, but will help eliminate the phrase "I'm sorry, but we have no more judges for this event. You'll have to try another game." Everyone wants to get into their favorite game, be it Living City, Living Jungle, or something else, and this will go a long way to solving this dilemma.

Remember, the membership is only as good as you make it. Let's all pull together and make sure that we never have to limit the number of Living Setting events at the GEN CON Game Fair and the WINTER FANTASY Convention

Kevin

When filling out scoring packs at conventions, please remember:

- Judges and players must fill out the entire voting form, including membership number, address, player ratings, player review, and best players.

- Members should use their names as they appear on their membership cards. Our database does not recognize middle or nicknames.

- Names on the player's voting sheets should be the same on all voting sheets. Do not use abbreviated names or the name of the character played.

- Double-check your math when adding across on the back of the scoring pack. Accuracy saves time here at HQ.

Judy

About the Cover

Artist and art teacher Stephen Schwartz returns to the Newszine with this elegant study in contrasting icons of fantasy in "Hidden Magic."

Publisher
Rick Behling

Editor
Dave Gross

Graphic Director
Larry Smith

Production Staff
Dave Conant
Paul Hanchette
Kevin Melka
Dave O'Brien

Proofreading
Shirley Surek

Subscriptions
Judy Mueller

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Send us your comments, complaints, compliments, or even gossip. Be sure to include a statement giving us permission to print your letter if you'd like to see it in our Letters page. You can reach us at our mailing address, or electronically at TSR.RPGA on the GEnie information network, or tsr.rpga@genie.geis.com via Internet.

Forgotten Deities

Lesser-Known Gods of the FORGOTTEN REALMS® Setting

by Eric Boyd

Karsus

Power: Demi-power (formerly greater)
Plane: Prime (now)
AoC: Cycle of nature, pulse of life, reincarnation
Align: N
WAL: Any
Symbol: Living human heart
Sex: Male

Karsus is an ancient Netherese deity who barely survives in the ruined city of Karse, located at the center of the mystical Dire Wood, deep within the High Forest. In olden days, religious refugees who worshiped Karsus were driven from the ancient land of Netheril. They built this city at the base of a tall butte of red stone which their legends held to be the remnants of Karsus's physical form. Legends tell how the eternal Karsus was fatally poisoned by an upstart Netherese mage named Wulgreth, who sought to steal immortality from the god.

Karse fell into ruin around the same time as Hellgate Keep was occupied by demons, when the death of the evil wizard Wulgreth caused the creation of the Dire Wood. The wizard yet lives on as an intensely evil, lich-like being within a black pyramid in the ruins of Karse. He seeks pure blood from the heart of Karsus to return to true life. An avatar of the dying god Karsus dwells in a temple atop the butte, his everflowing blood contributing to the magical nature of the Dire Wood, while deep within the butte, Karsus's gigantic living heart beats ponderously.

During the Time of Troubles, the avatar of Karsus emerged from his temple and fought Wulgreth in a dreadful combat that laid waste to large sections of the High Forest. It is believed Karsus was at least partially successful in wounding Wulgreth, as the Dire Wood has since stopped expanding according to most reports.

Karsus's Priests

Karsus has only a handful of surviving priests, all of whom are specialty priests and female, who are primarily drawn from the half-drow renegades who inhabit the region. The descendants of the folk of Eaerlann and Karse are led by an elven "princess," Tianna Skyflower, who has recently assumed the role of high priestess of Karsus and revived his worship among her people. Tianna has revived a practice of ghastly monthly offerings to Karsus, much like those performed by the followers of Zaltec in the distant land of Maztica.

Requirements: AB Con 13*; AL non-evil; WP any; AR any; RA blood red clothing, bloodstained arms and hands; SP All, Animal, Creation, Elemental*, Healing, Necromantic (not including raise dead), Time; SPL nil; PW 1) bonus NWP healing, 1) *Beltyn's burning blood* (W4, FRA), 5) *feign death* (W3), 9) *reincarnation* (P7); TU turn; QS *health blessing* or *robe of healing*

Letters

Jean and the Jungle

We knew she was moving over to design, but Jean's transfer came through a little earlier than we'd expected. All of us here at HQ are very happy that Jean's going to get a chance to edit and design for the games division, but we can't help wishing—perhaps a little selfishly—that she were still here to inspire us to work harder without losing sight of the fun in what we do. Luckily for us, she's still just down the hall, and we know she'll be at all the cons.

If you're one of the many members who's had a chance to work with Jean or play at one of her tables at a convention, send us any anecdotes or thoughts you'd like to share with the membership. Here are a few of the first letters and reminiscences about Jean's stay here at HQ.

◆◆◆

When I first met Jean Rabe, she was a pig. A pig with apparently amorous intentions toward member Ed Peterson.

Perhaps I should explain.

In the summer of 1986, I co-authored a Network scenario entitled Moonlight Madness with then Network Coordinator Penny Petticord. In the opening encounter of the second round, the PCs, who were all lycanthropes, were scattered about the countryside on the night after the full moon and had to extricate themselves from whatever they had gotten into the night before. Penny, displaying a skill vital to all Network Coordinators, had corralled Jean into running the event, and Jean jumped into the various roles the encounter required with gusto. In short order, I saw Jean become an angry bird, a bewildered ranger, lonely wolf, and a lovestruck pig.

In due course, I moved on to see how the other tables were doing, and I didn't see Jean again until a blustery day the following January, when she attended the WINTER FANTASY™ game convention in Lake Geneva at the behest of TSR, Inc.'s Harold Johnson. Harold had the unenviable task of replacing Penny, who had departed the Network for greener pastures.

In between running games and complaining about Lake Geneva's winter weather, Jean met with Harold several times to discuss details of the job. Once finished with Harold, Jean flagged me down to ask about what it was like to live in the Lake Geneva area and to work for TSR. "Is it always this cold?" she asked, shivering.

I assured Jean that Wisconsin winters tended to be snowy and cold, and that working at TSR, Inc., particularly as Network Coordinator, would require the patience of Job, skin thicker than an elephant's, and the endurance of Hercules. Jean was skeptical, though she was much too polite to tell me I was overstating my case.

Some months later, Jean became the Network Coordinator, and her patience, endurance, and general resistance to abuse proved to be equal to the job. Eventually, she got even with me for not trying harder to talk her out of becoming Network Coordinator by making me her assistant, but that's another story.

After more than seven years on the job, Jean is leaving behind a Network that is a lot different than the one she found. Network judges are still called upon to do some extraordinary things from time to time, but the Network's tournament program, once limited to a few midwestern conventions, has blossomed into international effort involving hundreds of conventions each year. The POLYHEDRON® Newszine, once published on an erratic schedule, is now a monthly magazine that reaches gamers on every continent. Jean's tenure also has seen the birth of the Living City, the Living Jungle, and Virtual Seattle. In fact, just about everything that is familiar to Network members today either got its start under Jean or has benefited from a major overhaul and facelift with Jean's guidance.

Thanks, Jean.

Skip Williams
Lake Geneva, WI

This year was a tough one for RPGA® Network HQ, with staff changes, difficult issues, and increased workloads to support a more active membership. It was also the year I came to realize just how much Jean cares about the RPGA Network and how much she has sacrificed to improve it. I had no idea that working 50+ hour weeks was par for her course, with 80+ hour weeks for over a month before the GEN CON® Game Fair. I could not fathom what motivated Jean and Bruce to give up what little personal time they had before the game fair to piece together much of the fantastically successful Living City Bazaar. They could have directly donated their time to help "kids and puppies." Jean must really care about making the RPGA fun for the membership. What will we do without her "Pouty-lip" to motivate members to pitch in?

Thank you, Jean, for caring enough to make a difference, and I look forward to watching your career bloom in your new assignment.

Carl Buehler
GEnie Mail

Jean has always promoted gaming. When she was a resident of Evansville, Indiana, she helped found the Evansville Gaming Guild and organized Glathricon. She was always happy to answer questions for new gamers and help them to hone their role-playing abilities. In fact, her home was known as "gaming central" to many of us in and out of the club. I think it can truly be said that Jean was the gaming mentor for many of us in Evansville, and without her guidance, we would never have grown to be the gamers we are now. She went out of her way to make sure we knew everything she could teach us, but she never lost sight of the fact that it should be fun. All of us in Evansville feel Jean is an icon of gaming, and we wish her well in her new endeavor.

Bob Etheridge
Evansville, IN

Under Jean's leadership, the Network began sponsoring tournaments for non-TSR game systems, a policy which went a long way toward broadening the membership to include fans of many game systems.

Jean herself brought a recognizable face and personality to the Network by

making appearances all over, writing tournaments, and lending her own style to the Newszine. Even gamers who have never personally met her feel that they know Jean. Her humor and tact have had a tremendous affect on the membership.

Moreover, Jean has devoted countless hours to running magic shops for Living City (16 straight hours at Dragon*Con, I believe!) and to promoting charities, which legitimized in many ways the role-playing community, promoting good will toward gaming from those who might have been misled by media perceptions of gamers and role-playing.

I think I'll always remember Jean at Dragon*Con two years ago, slumped, tired, and utterly defeated by all the conflicting demands placed on her, wondering why people couldn't just get along and have fun. But then she was called on to run a session of the "Caves of Confection" tournament, and she left that room with a smile on her face and a cheerful "Hello!" for everyone.

Nicky Rea
GEnie Mail

When I think of Jean, I always think of that friendly smile and that husky, good-natured chuckle—followed (if it's not over the phone) by a hug. My fondest memory of Jean is of her happily giving directions to a gamer attending his first GEN CON® Game Fair—a young, lost gamer on the verge of tears, bewildered by the rushing crowds and his loss of bearings. Jean gave him directions not just for navigating MECCA, but for downtown Milwaukee, too, managed to avoid making him feel foolish for asking, dispensed one of those hugs that both pushed him over the brink of tears—of relief—and quelled them again, and sent him on his way with a cheery wave.

She was rewarded by a smile that lit up the young gamer's face—after all, it's not every day one gains a new friend so swiftly and easily—and I wish Jean saw more of those smiles from all of us. She deserves them.

Elminster's smiling broadly now, just thinking of her. He promises to be gentle in his teasing, when next they meet. That little pout slays him.

Ed Greenwood
Somewhere in Canada

The Living Jungle

Does a katanga hero gain an AC adjustment for Dexterity when in bipedal or form? How about saru characters, who have a natural AC of 8?

Will wizard heroes be given specific fetishes as a reward? Or will they get to choose what spells they learn?

Can a saru character, who receives a +/-2 bonus to the punching/wrestling chart, also take the tumbling proficiency and gain an additional +2 bonus to unarmed combat?

Larry Douglas
Lansing, MI

Good questions! When the animal and bipedal forms were assigned Armor Class ratings, both the animal's hide and relative agility were considered; their ACs were derived as they would be for monsters, rather than for heroes. Thus, katanga characters gain an AC adjustment for Dexterity only when in human form.

Saru characters, on the other hand, do receive an AC bonus for Dexterity, since their lower Armor Class is only for their thick skins.

At the end of most Living Jungle tournaments, wizard characters may gain a new spell fetish. Usually, the player will be allowed to choose from a limited list of spell fetishes available.

Yes, the tumbling proficiency, along with most of the proficiencies in the Player's Handbook, *is allowed.*

If wizards gain their spells by meditating upon their various fetishes, and each fetish represents one spell, then how can a wizard start with five spells but only four fetishes?

David Brown
Internet Mail

They can't; you've caught a typo! Wizards can start with five fetishes, one for each of their initial spells.

Do the Nubari tribes and other hero races all speak the same language? What about the saru?

Rudra tribe heroes automatically gain proficiency in either spear or bow. Does this mean that Rudra clerics and wizards can have these proficiencies?

Guy Marquardt
Internet Mail

All hero races share the Common Tongue of the Living Jungle: Nubari. Saru have their own language, and must spend two proficiency slots to gain Nubari as a proficiency (as noted in their description).

Rudra wizards and clerics are still bound by their class limitations for weapons, so they miss out on the bonus proficiency for being members of the tribe.

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Elminster's Everwinking Eye

Country Treasures

By Ed Greenwood

Treasures are strange things: to some, love and friendship; to others, power and influence; to still others, gems, rare metal, or trapped magic. What each being values most, or considers treasure at all, is a large measure of who and what that being really is.

—Melliyechorl Varast, Master-Teacher of Archmages of the Inner Fire (Defenders of Halruaa)
Words to All Wizards
The Year of the Bright Blade

Our treasure tour of the pastoral realm of Turmish continues with a foray into the countryside. Many of the place-names in this column will be unfamiliar to readers, who are advised to consult the map appearing in last issue to learn just where the treasure sites are.

Banthar

This mining-center and waystop on the trail through Lilit Pass is now a quiet, sheep-rearing and outfitting market-town, but it was once a brigand stronghold—and there are many tales of treasure buried by brigands on the run. Many small leather satchels of coins have been found over the years—and a dozen winters back an adventurer delving into a cellar found a sack of rubies!

Bistal's Bottom

Most travelers know they've reached this scattering, unassuming little village only when they see its name painted on the side of the local mill. Bistal's Bottom (named for an early owner of the hollow that now contains the millpond) has more trees and gardens than houses, and it straggles around the shores of its small, placid central millpond.

Nonetheless, it is a destination sought by adventurers from all over Faerûn—adventurers who'd claim the settlement as their own if it were not under the protection of Oghma the Binder. On more than one occasion, mages, priests, or merchants have tried to claim a certain wooded hilltop in "The Bottom" as their own, only to be found soon witless and wandering, *feeble-minded* for their pains.

The Father of All Knowledge protects the hilltop because of what lies beneath a rock pile at its summit: The Cave of Memories. Anyone who reaches the depths of this small, steeply-descending shaft sees things: visions from ages past, usually dramatic events such as the deaths of kings or famous heroes (with all the attendant treasure), great battles, the making of artifacts, the hiding of treasures, and the like.

When the visions fade, the person who beheld them can recall what was seen, clearly and without forgetting any detail, to the end of his days—and, by some magic of the cave, is whisked to a remote spot in Faerûn (a *teleport without error* to a random destination).

Of old, many children vanished from Bistal's Bottom because they strayed into the cave and were transported elsewhere—and so the hilltop acquired a haunted reputation. The village today is home to various farmers (who raise animals, not crops), some expert hunters (including more than one ranger of skill), a halfling family who run the mill, and Shaeril, a priestess of Oghma.

Shaeril watches over the Cave of Memories and is said to be protected by Oghma, such that she can defy bands of armed men, archmages, and like threats. She eagerly discusses reports of the Cave's visions and has helped many adventurers who've managed to get back to Bistal's Bottom after being teleported afar identify what they saw. More than one has made his fortune by heeding Shaeril. The Cave of Memories works as often as one dares enter it—its magic is not, as some in Sembia have falsely reported, "one vision to a soul."

Centaur Bridge

This town surrounds an arching stone bridge that carries the road over a long, tranquil pond that flows from nowhere to nowhere, rising from springs only to vanish down sinkholes not far away.

Mist and damp are constant features of "the Bridge." Most of the town's stone cottages are covered with lush green moss and creepers; wooden construction rots swiftly. A deep old forest surrounds the homes and stables, and there are the usual tales of treasure buried not far into the woods by travelers on the run—who never returned to reclaim it.

One local tale concerns more elaborate riches. At the east end of Centaur Bridge, north off the road, is a clearing just visible from the saddle on bright days, if one knows when and where to look. Said to be haunted (by a succession of ghostly monsters—probably the spell-creations of a mage who wanted to be left alone while investigating the place), this clearing is not swallowed by the forest because the turf is underlaid by the cellars of a vanished mansion.

Those who dig soon uncover flagstones; beneath them are cellars leading down to vaults deep beneath the earth. This was once the grand home of the merchant prince Torst Habilar (in the days when merchant-lords contended for the rule of all Turmish).

The vaults are said to be crammed with exquisite statuary purchased in the Tashalar or (accounts differ) plundered in wars that raged in Unther and Mulhorand. Some of Habilar's vast wealth (in the form of coins, or perhaps trade-bars) is also, according to local legend, hidden somewhere under, or behind the walls of, these vaults.

Many adventuresome locals have seen the statues (until lurking monsters became numerous, large torch-parties descended hopefully into the vault from time to time), but none ever found the riches. A recent plan to haul up the statues for sale in Sembia, Suzail, and in the cities around The Lake of Steam

ended in disaster when a band of workers fled in the face of an almost unbelievable variety of monsters. Some folk in Centaur Bridge whisper of a Deepspawn (the fell monsters that give birth to an unending stream of monsters they've devoured in past; these beasts are detailed in FR11 Dwarves Deep and in the revised FORGOTTEN REALMS® campaign setting boxed set. Most folk who talk of such things in the taverns of "the Bridge" agree; local debate centers on whether the horror just found its way in "from below", or an evil mage, mind flayer band, drow patrol, or other evil power installed it there as a guardian.

Dauntshield

This rather stark community of stone cottages crowns the windswept heights of a bare rock ridge (the most defensible position for many miles). Once a busy smelting and forging center (its mark, still seen on rough ingots and tradebars, is two blank shields, one above the other, enclosed in an oval ring), Dauntshield has seen once-rich local lodes play out, and the flow of ore dwindle. Today, it is home to shepherds, several farmers who make excellent sharp-flavored white cheese (just beginning to gain fame up and down the Vilhon; enterprising merchants take note), and prospectors who believe they'll be able to find even better veins of iron and silver than those that once made Dauntshield a roaring center of hammers, forge-smokes, and riches.

The shattered battlements of a small keep at the south end of the ridge mark Dauntshield's unsuccessful defense, some eighty winters ago, against a strong company of brigands, who seized the town to get the stores of gems (rubies and emeralds) amassed there by the richest, proudest local mining families—the dwarven family of Fastspur, and the human Kaskar and Maerittar clans. The brigands slaughtered all folk of those three families that they could find, and did find enough gems that they were able to "strip off their rags and dive into the gems, swimming through a vast pile of them as if through a bathing-pool."

The merchant lords of Alaghôn were outraged at this lawlessness (and harm to their investments), so they dispatched an army to deal with the brigands.

Deal with them it did—but when the battle was done, the few survivors knew nothing of where the gems had gone, and no trace of them has yet been found. Unless the brigands had some magical means of transporting or hiding the gems (and most accounts agree they had no priests or mages among them), there is no way the gems could have been carried off—no more than half a dozen brigands escaped the army that retook Dauntshield. So the gems must be hidden somewhere in or very near this now-sleepy village. Over the eighty winters, many have searched, employing magic as well as picks and shovels—and old prospectors even poke about after the riches today . . . but despite ravaging every cellar and foot of street in all Dauntshield, they've found "nothing—yet," as one greybeard gruffly put it.

Gildenglade

The second-largest community in Turmish (after proud Alaghôn) is that rarest of things: a community where elves, half-elves, humans, and dwarves all live happily together—in a place dedicated to woodcarving and logging!

Gildenglade works because the elves have been given the final say as to which trees are felled or limbed, and when. They carefully and continually plant new trees, and keep the woods east and west of the town, along the cliffs of The Aphrunn Mountains, free of dryads and other intelligent forest creatures, to keep strife to a minimum. Experiments in the planting of forest shrubs and creepers are continuous, as the elves take advantage of the plentiful sunlight that reaches every part of these "clean" forests of widely-spaced trees.

As a result of Gildenglade's success, large-scale logging, tree-cutting beyond the needs of local woodcarvers and those who heat their homes with firewood), isn't carried on elsewhere in Turmish.

The dwarves who dwell in (or rather, beneath) Gildenglade are also happy: the elusive veins of gold ore that honeycomb the rock are unusually pure.

As might be expected, the gold is at the heart of all local tales of lost and hidden treasure: gold secreted high in the mountains to the south, against a time when war might come to the land; gold stolen by an unscrupulous caravanmaster that never reached its destination in the Vilhon; gold seized in orc, hobgoblin, and bugbear raids in earlier days, when the swords and spells of Gildenglade were not so strong; and honor-gold buried with the dwarves.

Tales of lost gold just awaiting a lucky (or persistent) adventurer grow in the telling, but some credence is lent to stories of riches in Gildenglade by the phantom orcs and humans seen gliding silently along the streets and upland trails by night, endlessly seeking gold with picks, sacks, and shovels. These silent images melt away whenever touched or followed—although at least one turned out to be a crimson Death (detailed in the MONSTROUS MANUAL™, under "Mist, Crimson Death"), luring victims out to a remote spot where it could wheel about to slay them.

Holdensword

This isolated hamlet of cattle-ranchers is built around a fortified stone castle as large and impressive as any fortress of Chessenta or Thay. Once "The Hold of the Sword," the stronghold of a long-vanished mercenary company (The Riders of the Sword) who saw much service when humankind first began to settle on the northern shores of The Sea of Fallen Stars, Holdensword is today home to a rather stern, hard-working community of folk who herd cattle in the rolling uplands south and east of the rocky spur on which the castle stands.

Passages lace the rock beneath the castle—granaries, burial catacombs, and a long series of defenses that men beset by more numerous attacking orcs (or worse) could retreat through, yielding up one after another only as they were lost. Somewhere in these underways—or perhaps in secret passages within the hugely thick walls of the castle itself—are several secret rooms where a wizard high in the ranks of The Rider of the Sword lived and worked.

This mage, one Olonther, is known to have created dozens of battle horrors (helmed horrors, detailed in the revised FORGOTTEN REALMS campaign setting boxed set) to guard the halls and chambers of the castle. Some may still lurk deep in the catacombs—or in the castle walls, waiting for someone to find them in their secret passages. With them waits, it is thought, Olonther's spell books, wealth, and other magic—possibly accompanied by the mage himself, who may be dead, undead, or worse. . . .

We'll look at more rumored treasures of Turmish next time, as Elminster sets forth more gleaming Realmslore before us. I hope my wine cellar holds out!

❑

Dangers from the Dark Side

Villains for the *Star Wars: New Republic* Campaign, Part Two

by Bill Slavicsek and Michele Carter

The New Republic picket ship made a slow pass around the derelict vessel, looking for some indication of its origin or what had happened to it. The derelict was an old Outrider*-class cruiser from just before the time of the Clone Wars. They were designed as exploration ships, but they packed the weaponry of war ships.*

"Captain Korsu, I've found an identifying mark," the Mon Cal ensign at the sensor station called out, "mark 2-2-7."

"Swing us around," Korsu commanded. "Let's get a light on that part of its hull."

The picket ship's spotlight crawled across the riveted hull of the derelict, showing no signs of structural damage or any indications that the vessel ever saw any combat. It was simply dead in space. Korsu contemplated the possibilities as the circle of light reached toward the ensign's mark. The captain expected to see an Old Republic registry inscription, but the metallic gleam that reflected back through the picket ship's viewport made him grip the arms of his command chair.

There, illuminated by the picket ship's spotlight, was a silver crescent, its tips pointed down. A pair of ignited lightsabers were crossed at the handles beneath the silver crescent.

"That insignia," Korsu whispered in awe, "it's the emblem of the Order of the Silver Jedi." A moment later Korsu's voice was loud and full of confidence again. "Hook us up to the derelict's main entry port. I want a boarding team ready in ten minutes!"

◆◆◆

Almost half an hour later, Korsu and his team were at the airlock connecting the derelict to his picket ship. "The Council's going to be very pleased with us for finding this vessel," Korsu told his team. "Think of the treasures it might hold, Jedi history we thought was lost forever. Let's see what's inside."

The moment the airlock opened, Korsu felt a hand on his arm. He turned to see Kara, the young medic who was also learning the ways of the Jedi, cautioning him with a firm touch. "There's something wrong in there," Kara said with a tremble in her voice. "I feel ... darkness ... evil ... the Dark Side ..."

It was upon them then, something large and fast and ravenous. It barreled through the team, knocking each member aside as it reached for Kara. The young Jedi student felt the Force leave her with a violent rip, then everything went black. "Tasty, but not enough," the creature said in a dry, hoarse whisper, "not enough at all." It turned back to the rest of the team.

Only Korsu had recovered, his blaster out and pointed right at the thing that looked like it used to be a man. "You want to fight me?" the creature asked in obvious amusement. "Do you think you're any match for the greatest knight of the greatest order of Jedi that ever existed? Go ahead. Take your best shot."

Captain Korsu did. He died less than one minute later, never knowing that he had lost his ship to a creature of the Dark Side ...

The Dark Side of the Force. No greater symbol of evil exists in the *Star Wars* galaxy. Anger, fear, and aggression are the emotions most closely connected to the Dark Side, a seductive, corrupting aspect of the Force that's easier to use and quicker to respond—but as ravenous as a wild beast and extremely covetous. Once a Force-user succumbs to the easy path, he or she may forever be caught in its embrace.

In part one of this article (issue 103), we introduced a widespread organization of evil Force-users known as the Prophets of the Dark Side for use with *Star Wars: The Roleplaying Game* from West End Games. This time out we'll look at a couple of characters who have been thoroughly twisted and corrupted by the Dark Side — a unique creature called a Force vampire and an insane wookiee named Warkin. Then we'll look at three Force powers that will make your Dark Side villains even nastier: *Create Force Wraith, Force Travel,* and *Taint.*

The Force Vampire

Template Type: Force vampire (unique)
Loyalty: To itself
Height: 2.1 meters
Species: formerly Human
Homeworld: Coruscant
Age: 90 Standard Years
DEXTERITY 3D+1
Blaster 3D+2, dodge 8D+1, brawling parry 5D+1, lightsaber 7D+1, melee combat 6D+2, melee parry 6D+2
KNOWLEDGE 2D+2
Alien species 4D+2, intimidation 7D, planetary systems 4D+1, willpower 8D
MECHANICAL 2D+1
Starfighter piloting 4D+1
PERCEPTION 3D+2
Command 5D+2, hide 7D+1, sneak 7D+2
STRENGTH 4D
Brawling 6D+2, climbing/jumping 7D+1, stamina 6D+1
TECHNICAL 2D
Security 5D
Force Sensitive?: Yes
Force Points: 1
Dark Side Points: 5
Character Points: 8
Move: 12
Equipment: None; the vampire disdains the use of weapons (even lightsabers) and prefers to physically overwhelm his victims.
Force Skills: Control 6D, Sense 7D, Alter 8D.

Special Abilities:

Force Drain: The Force vampire sustains itself by feeding on the ambient Force energy present in all living beings. The creature seeks out Force-users first, then Force sensitives. In a pinch, it can even draw energy from nonForce sensitives.

The vampire must make a successful *brawling* attack to touch its victim (this particular use of *brawling* causes no damage; it's just to determine whether or not the touch connects). In the same round as a successful touch, the vampire makes an Alter roll against the victim's *Perception, willpower,* or *Control* roll. If the victim beats the vampire's roll, no transfer of Force occurs. If the vampire wins, see the table below.

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What's Drained	Level of Success			
	VE/EM	D	VD+	
Force Skills	1	2	3	4
Force Points	1	2	3	4
Char. Points		1	2	3	4

The vampire drains away Force skills first, then Force points. It can even draw sustenance from character points, but only does so as a last resort. The numbers in the table refer to the number of points drained from the victim's statistics on a success of the appropriate level. When the vampire gets the energy, it is converted into Force points that the vampire can use as follows: Force skills = x2 Force points; Force points = x1 Force points; character points = x1/2 Force points, round down.

Force skills return at a rate of 1 point per hour in *hibernation trance*, or 1 point per day without using the power. Drained Force and character points are lost forever.

If the vampire ever uses up all of his stored Force points, he falls into a coma-like state and can take no actions. If someone touches him, however, he can make a *Force drain* attack to regain energy.

Vampiric Strength: The Force vampire can convert Force points into Strength for a limited amount of time, as shown below.

1 FP = +1D Str for 3 rounds
2 FP = +2D Str for 2 rounds
3 FP = +3D Str for 1 round

This Strength boost can be used just like normal Strength to increase damage inflicted or reduce damage sustained.

Vampiric Fear: The Dark Side has granted a deadly ability to the creature. It can radiate waves of terror by resonating the Dark Side within it. These waves cause such palpable fear that the victim actually takes physical damage. Such an attack costs 1 Force point. The vampire makes a Control roll as a damage roll. The victim defends with his own *Control*, *Perception*, or *willpower*. The result is applied as physical damage. Victims killed in this fashion have looks of absolute terror etched into their faces at the time of death.

Quote: "You smell of the Force ... and I hunger!"

Description: Tel Angor was once the greatest knight of the Order of the Silver Jedi. The Order's mandate was to "Serve and Protect" the Old Republic, and specifically to combat the Dark Side wherever it manifested. The Silver Jedi, even more than the "ordinary" Jedi who served the Republic, were dedicated to the eradication of all Dark Side influence from the galaxy. They were a militant organization, but one that also included many great Jedi theorists and philosophers.

Seeing that their Dark Side enemies had the ability to call upon the Dark Side to bolster their strength, the Silver Jedi experimented with ways to make their connection with the Light Side even greater. With the best of intentions, they tampered with the natural bond to the Force that all beings share. Some enjoyed a minor amount of success: their abilities seemed enhanced, their powers more potent. In their haste to defeat the Dark Side once and for all, the Order found what they believed was a fool-proof method (if somewhat dangerous) of opening an individual fully to the power of the Force.

Tel Angor, an experienced and dedicated Jedi Knight, volunteered for the experiment without reservation. He took at least a month to prepare: meditating, fasting, and concentrating on his connection to the Force in anticipation of a complete merging. He believed that he would become a living symbol of the Light Side, a glowing beacon of righteousness and justice.

The experiment backfired, transforming the once-noble Jedi into a horrific abomination. Instead of drawing on the Force to bolster his abilities, the Dark Side corrupted Angor into a creature that *fed* on the Force, and indeed required it to survive. The newborn Force vampire's first action was to feed upon the Silver Jedi who had aided him with the experiment; his second action was to destroy all the notes and computer files he could find about his creation.

The Force vampire fled the Order's stronghold into the Core worlds. Though the Order of the Silver Jedi tried to track him down, they only found his victims; those that did find him died at his hands. (Angor enjoyed killing his victims with his bare hands after a successful "feeding.") The vampire that was once Tel Angor retained all the knowledge and skills he had learned as a Jedi, and his new state only enhanced his cunning. He became a vicious hunter, perpetually ravenous for Force-sensitive victims.

The vampire lived on the fringes of the galaxy's populated areas for years, traveling from planet to planet by way of passenger liners and unwary transport ships. It grew to hate the light that it once embraced, allowing the Dark Side to corrupt it completely.

Finally, before the Clone Wars erupted, a team of seven Silver Jedi tracked down the creature Angor had become. In a great battle, they captured the creature and imprisoned him aboard an *Outrider*-class ship. The seven Jedi sealed Angor inside, then joined him as the ship was sent on an automated continual jump through hyperspace. They would serve as the vampire's guardians, keeping him imprisoned until a way could be found to bring Angor back to the light.

Not long after the trip began, one of the Jedi made a mistake and the vampire escaped. Angor drew energy from the careless Jedi and quickly went about destroying his captors. The last of the Silver Jedi on the ship, an experienced knight named Bar Oplut, destroyed the ship's hyper- and sublight drives to keep the vampire from escaping. Then he waited for the inevitable battle. He died valiantly.

The vessel fell out of hyperspace and floated dead in space until it was found by a New Republic picket ship. The galaxy is once again open to the creature that was once Tel Angor — and the creature wants to feed.

The vampire radiates like a walking Dark Side nexus. It can be sensed by anyone using the Force; but it senses them, too.

The vampire is a perversion of the Force, created by a unique experiment that can probably never be duplicated. It is the only one in existence. Unfortunately, nothing is left of the good man Tel Angor once was. All that remains is the Dark Side.

The Force vampire is a huge creature, both extremely tall and extremely broad. It wears dark robes that are soiled and tattered, and its gray hair and beard is long and unkempt. Its eyes glow with a crimson evil, and its cruel mouth always wears a terrible sneer.

Adventure Hooks:

◆ A terrible mystery has New Republic officials worried, so they've turned to the PCs for help (especially if the PCs have a Force-user among them). In four space ports, on four different planets, in four different systems, corpses have turned up that all bear a striking resemblance to each other. Besides having died of no

apparent cause (no blaster burns, no vibroblade cuts, no traces of poison), each body's face was twisted in genuine horror. It was as if they had been literally scared to death.

Investigators have discovered two similarities linking all of the murders together. Each murder occurred while the passenger starliner Dantooine's Pride was in port. No similar deaths occurred before that time or after it departed. Second, the investigators' Force-user could sense none of the normal connections to the Force that even dead bodies should exhibit. She wasn't skilled enough to determine more, however, so the PCs were called in.

A PC Force-user will sense this lack of Force in any of the corpses he or she examines. This isn't the emptiness of death; it's a total, violent severing of the connections that bind all things together. It is an abomination that will leave the Force-user uneasy and even a little afraid.

What's going on? The Force vampire is using the passenger liner as a lair. It isn't hunting aboard the starliner (except for an occasional snack that takes only a portion of the Force without killing any of its victims). It waits for each port of call before stalking victims with which to sate its undying hunger. The vampire plans to remain aboard Dantooine's Pride until it reaches the Core World of Coruscul. From the point in which the PCs get involved, that star port is four stops away. At each stop in between, the vampire will commit another Force-stealing murder unless the PCs can find it and destroy it.

Why does the vampire want to reach Coruscul? The world has a hidden stronghold that once belonged to the Silver Jedi. It was the one location the vampire never raided, so the records concerning its birth and powers remain in the base's computer logs. The vampire wants to destroy this last reminder of the Silver Jedi, as well the last evidence of its existence. There is a data journal in the stronghold that describes the experiments and the results that twisted Tel Angor into a monster. The data journal ends with the apologetic note, "We never should have tried."

The PCs can attempt to reach one of the ports still waiting for the arrival of Dantooine's Pride. There, they can set up some sort of ambush for the murderer. Or they can try to get aboard the starliner and deal with the murderer in deep space. Horrific scenes can be played out as the PCs get closer to the monster's hidden lair deep in the bowels of the huge starship. They track the vampire through the ship's many corridors and levels, and it stalks them in return.

◆ The PCs can also become involved in this plot by becoming targets for the vampire's hunger. They can be minding their own business in a space port when the vampire catches the ambient Force in one of the PCs. That PC is then stalked through the space port and eventually attacked. Though the PC is probably not killed (he saves himself or his companions arrive to drive the monster off), he is visibly shaken and hurt by the attack. Do the PCs try to find this monster? Or do they wait for it to return to finish the job it started?

◆ Another possibility is to tie the vampire to another villain. What if the remnants of the Empire convince the creature to help them? Or what if Jedgar the High Prophet of the Dark Side gains the vampire's trust? Of course, the Force vampire will never simply be someone's pawn, but it might agree to work with another agency until it can get back to its own agenda.

Warkin

Template Type: Insane Wookiee
Loyalty: To Jedgar
Height: 2.3 meters
Species: Wookiee
Homeworld: Kashyyyk (repudiated by his homeworld)
Age: 250 Standard Years
DEXTERITY 2D+2
Bowcaster 5D+2, brawling parry 6D+2, dodge 4D+2, grenade 4D+2
KNOWLEDGE 2D
Intimidation 6D, streetwise 5D+1, survival 5D+2
MECHANICAL 3D+1
Space transports 5D+1, starship gunnery 4D+2
PERCEPTION 2D+1
Hide 4D+1, search 5D+2, sneak 4D+2
STRENGTH 5D
Brawling 7D+1, climbing/jumping 6D, stamina 6D+1
TECHNICAL 2D+2
Force Sensitive?: No
Force Points: 3
Dark Side Points: 4
Character Points: 12
Move: 10
Equipment: Wookiee bowcaster (4D damage), claws (Str + 2D damage).
Special Ability: Meld with shadow (as a Defel). This power is a gift from the Dark Side.
Quote: "Rrraaaggghhhh!"
Description: Warkin is a huge unkempt wookiee. He doesn't brush his fur, and cares little for his appearance. He is easily provoked into rage, and only Jedgar's commands keep him from lashing out randomly. Warkin uses his claws in combat, an action forbidden to wookiees, who believe such to be a dishonorable act.

The mad wookiee willingly serves the Dark Side and High Prophet Jedgar. He, like many others, has been warped and seduced by the Dark Side's easy promise of power. As a young wookiee, Warkin found that his great strength (impressive even among wookiees) often gave him advantages and power over others. He relished this power, becoming first the village bully and later a dangerous outcast from the wookiee community. When the Dark Side Prophet Merili took control of the wookiee planet Kashyyyk, Warkin went to her and offered his services. Merili arrogantly stated that she needed no bodyguard or assassin to do her work for her, but she recognized the Dark Side taint in the wookiee's soul. Merili gave Warkin to Jedgar as a useful tool and peace offering, and Warkin has served Jedgar faithfully ever since.

The mad wookiee is not Force sensitive, but his personality and actions were such that the Dark Side "noticed" and offered him even more power. Warkin is considered a traitor to the wookiee people, and all other wookiees will try to destroy him on sight as a matter of honor.

Adventure Hooks: Though Warkin is usually with his master, the PCs might encounter him on one of his missions for Jedgar, or on some mission of his own. (Jedgar allows the mad wookiee some free leave, allowing Warkin to believe he's more than a favored slave.) For wookiee PCs, merely the thought of a traitorous, evil wookiee who uses his claws in combat should be enough to send them into battle rage.

Warkin is a very, very dangerous enemy, and if he decides to fight the PCs he'll use every terror tactic he has (stalking them, leaping out of the shadows to attack and withdrawing, and setting traps and ambushes) to make them fear him before they die.

New Dark Side Powers

Create Force Wraith
(Control, Sense, and Alter)

Control Difficulty: Moderate. Used to draw a portion of the Dark Side out of the creator to give shape to a wraith. A Moderate success creates one wraith, Difficult creates two, and Very Difficult or better creates three.

Sense Difficulty: Easy. This determines the level of contact the creator can choose to maintain with his creations. Easy to Moderate success allows minimum contact; the creator can sense the status of his wraiths and issue long-distance commands. A success of Difficult allows the creator to momentarily take control of a particular wraith's senses; granting him the ability to see and hear what the wraith sees and hears three times per day (for five minutes at a time). A Very Difficult success or better gives the creator unlimited access to a wraith's senses, but also makes him susceptible to any damage the wraith takes while the connection is in effect.
Alter Difficulty: Easy. This determines the Strength of the wraith. Easy = 2D, Moderate = 3D, Difficult = 4D, Very Difficult = 5D, Heroic = 5D+2.

Effect: *Warning. This power earns the user a Dark Side point.* This power allows Dark Side users to create servants called Force wraiths. The statistics for Force wraiths appears below. Force wraiths serve their creators faithfully. When a Force wraith receives damage equal to a mortal wound or greater, it dissolves back into the darkness it was created from.

Force Wraith
Height: Varies; 1 to 4 meters
DEXTERITY 3D+2
Brawling parry 4D+2, dodge 4D+2, brawling 4D+2
PERCEPTION 2D+2
Hide 3D+2, search 3D+2, sneak 3D+2
STRENGTH 2D to 5D+2
Brawling 3D to 6D+2, climbing/jumping 2D+1 to 6D, lifting 2D+1 to 6D+2, stamina 3D to 6D
Move: 6 to 12
Natural Weapons: claws (damage Strength +2D), teeth (damage Strength +1D)
Description: Created by the power of the Dark Side, Force wraiths are semi-corporeal, nonsentient shadowy things that obey the commands of their creator. They radiate pure evil, giving off emanations of cold and death to those who can sense such things. Like walking nexuses of the Dark Side, Force wraiths can be ordered to perform specific tasks or can be mentally controlled by their creators, providing extensions of the creator's senses wherever they go. Both Merili and Jedgar know the secret for calling forth Force wraiths, though both use them in different ways.

Merili's Force wraiths are huge, standing nearly four meters tall. They resemble dark, nightmare versions of wookiees that are fearsome and devastating in combat. Jedgar's are smaller, insectoid things, roughly two meters tall. He uses them as spies, guards, and even warriors when he needs combat fodder. While Merili commands her wraiths and then lets them run free, Jedgar often remains in contact with his wraiths, using them as his eyes and ears in far-off locales. Those who have faced any version of a Force wraith and lived to tell the tale remember the incident the way a child remembers a bad dream. If there are any true monsters in the *Star Wars* galaxy, Force wraiths are them.

Force Travel
(Sense and Alter)

Sense Difficulty: Moderate, modified by familiarity of destination.

Alter Difficulty: Moderate, modified by distance to destination. Add +5 for each additional person to follow the Jedi through the portal.

Required Powers: *Sense Force, Telekinesis,* and *Farseeing* or *Instinctive Astrogation*

Effect: *Warning. This power earns the user a Dark Side point, as it breaks the normal rules of the galaxy by ripping the Force asunder.* By use of this power, the Force user is able to create a momentary rift in space and step through it, traveling great distances instantly.

The difficulty is modified by how distant the destination point is, and how familiar it is to the user.

Sense Modifiers

Destination is:	Add to difficulty:
Very familiar (home)	+4
Fairly familiar (friend's home), or within clear sight	+8
Visited once, or partially visible	+12
Never visited, but well reproduced visually	+16
Never visited, but carefully described	+30

Alter Modifiers

Destination is:	Add to difficulty:
In line of sight	+2
Not in line of sight, but 1-100 meters away	+5
101 meters to 10 km away	+7
11 to 1,000 km away	+10
Same planet but more than 1,000 km away	+15
Same star system but not on the same planet	+20
Not in the same star system	+30

Taint
(Alter)

Alter Difficulty: Moderate.

Effect: *Warning. This power earns the user a Dark Side point.* With this power, a Dark Side Force user can taint an object, causing Force users connected to the light side discomfort or even pain. A Moderate success stains a single object of no more than one meter in size with the feel of the Dark Side. It radiates the Dark Side to Force-users and Force sensitives. If either come in contact with the object, they suffer a stun effect. If a Force-user tries to use a Force power on the object, he must beat the success roll used to taint it or suffer a wound.

A Difficult success or better taints the object with enough Dark Side residue to automatically cause wounds to Force sensitives it comes in contact with.

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Thanks to Lester Smith for his input on *Force Travel.*

Poised for War

The Military Forces of Ravens Bluff

by Alex Lombardi

Ravens Bluff sits atop a stretch of land bloodied by years of raiding bands of monsters and thieves. The port town and the communities around it were also plagued by pirates—until Charles Oliver O'Kane, supported by the Lady Lauren DeVillars, won the city's Champions Games and took the title of Lord Mayor. O'Kane brought most of the lords under one banner, assembled a force to repel the brigands, and rallied ships and their crews to defeat the pirates.

Since that time, Ravens Bluff has been prosperous, growing into a major city. But O'Kane and his supporters remain ever vigilant, fearing the return of troubled times. And the lords and resident adventurers work to keep the militia well-trained and ready.

Ravens Bluff's Navy

The navy plays a prominent part in the city's defense, patrolling the Dragon Reach to protect the plethora of merchant vessels making runs to the many cities dotting the long coast. Ravens Bluff maintains six ships which patrol the Dragon Reach and its mouth, where it joins with the Sea of Fallen Stars. Another dozen ships are held in reserve at Navy Row.

In the event of war, Ravens Bluff's naval force would be enhanced further with troops and vessels belonging to the city's many lords. This war-time Fleet falls under the command of Lord Calvin Longbottle, Regent of the Harbor.

Ravens Bluff's Navy Port Facilities
Navy Row consists of the docking facilities owned and maintained by the city. "The Row," as it is commonly called, lies in the northwestern part of the harbor and wharf area. It is a mile long, quarter mile deep stretch of land, with eight long piers evenly spaced along its western half. This is where the navy's ships are kept when in port. The Row's land side is enclosed by a 20-foot high stone wall. Eight 30-foot tall stone towers run the length of the wall and are complemented by a pair of smaller wooden watch towers between each pair of the stone towers.

The stone towers are used to give the sentinels enough elevation to obtain a good view of sea traffic. Navy troops use the smaller wooden structures to watch the sea and the city for approaching trouble. The majority of the buildings along the row are barracks. There is enough space to accommodate more than 1,800 crew, but most of the bunks stand empty during peace time.

The wharf area also boasts a ship maintenance and repair dock, a smithy, several large storage facilities (both above- and below-ground), a fire fighting water pump system, and an admiralty section from which Lord Calvin Longbottle would command the navy during war or threats of piracy. Most of the buildings are protected to a degree—either by natural means or through magic—to be more resistant to fire, electric, and acid attacks. The naval base has six heavy catapults, of which at least two are manned at all times.

In addition to the 80-sailor force that guards and maintains this facility, and the 60 or so sailors who reside here, there are a handful of volunteer priests from the city's Clerical Circle, and wizards belonging to the secretive society known as "Guardians of the Celestial Mysteries." The wizards and priests serve as extra protection, and they relieve spell casters who take long stints on the city's active ships.

The Ships of Ravens Bluff's Navy
Ravens Bluff's permanent naval force consists of eight heavy war galleons and 10 fast and sleek caravels. Two of the warships and four of the caravels are active. The rest of the fleet stays in reserve in The Row. The reserve ships are well maintained, and they are constantly rotated with the active ships to prevent wear.

The war galleons are 240' long and 38' across. They displace almost 400 tons unloaded and draw eight feet of water. Loaded with provisions and crew, they displace between 480 and 500 tons and draw 10 feet. They are built from the finest wood, and they are heavily reinforced with metal. Each ship has three heavy masts and can receive additional power from up to 40 oarsmen. It is said that even when fully loaded, with a favorable wind and a full rowing complement, these heavy warships can make 12 to 14 knots. Because of their fine construction and good maintenance each ship has from 34 to 42 hull points. Ship's complement consists of 40 to 60 sailors, and up to a full company of 100 fully-armed troops and their commander.

These ships are also armed with two heavy and two light ballistae, a pair of heavy catapults, and a steel tipped ram. The heavy ballistae can inflict 2-16 (S/M) and 3-24 (L) points respectively, and they have a firing rate of 1/4 per round. They are each manned by six men and have a minimum firing range of 10' and a maximum range of 400'. The light ballistae cause 2-12 (S/M) and 3-18 (L) points and have a firing rate of 1/2 per round. They are each manned by four men and have a minimum firing range of 5' and a maximum range of 320'. The heavy catapults inflict 2-24 (S/M), and 4-16 (L) points and are each manned by 10 men. They have a firing rate of 1/4 per round with a minimum range of 180' and a maximum range of 360'. Ramming, which requires a minimum speed of 6 knots inflicts a base of 9-16 points of damage. In addition, the ram causes 1-4 points for each knot of speed over 10, to a maximum bonus of 4-16 points.

War galleons have five decks. From the bottom up, they are the lower berth, the upper berth, the main deck, the first forecastle and quarter decks, and the upper forecastle and quarter decks. In addition, the ship has a large hold beneath the lower berth, which is split in three sections. The first and largest is the center hold, where most of the supplies and cargo is held. The second area holds most of the troop quarters for the infantry complement. The last and smallest area is the galley, which contains four cells, each with room for up to eight prisoners. The lower berth holds the remaining troops and the majority of the crew.

The main deck holds three masts and both catapults. Each catapult covers a 160-degree field on either side of the ship. The upper and lower quarter deck

levels are used as officers' and visitors' quarters. The quarter deck also houses the ship's wheel and the two light ballistae on swivels, covering an arc of 270 degrees centered on the ship's wheel. The forecastle's upper level provides lodging for the captain, the troop commander, and any specially attached naval personnel such as wizards or priests. The lower level consists of weapon storage areas and is locked and guarded at all times. The ship captain, his first mate, and the infantry commander have the only keys to this area.

The 10 caravels are 120' long and 25' across. They displace 240 tons unloaded and draw six feet of water. Loaded with provisions and crew, they displace 300 tons and draw eight feet. Each ship has three masts and heavy rigging. With a favorable wind, these ships can make 14 to 16 knots. Each ship has 20 to 24 hull points. Each has from 20 to 40 sailors and up to two fully armed units (50 sailors each). The ships are armed with two light ballistae and a pair of light catapults.

All the ships have been enchanted to resist fire and electrical attacks, gaining +3 to saving throws and suffering only half or quarter damage damage. Powerful wards protect the vessels from such spells as *warp wood* and *heat metal*. In addition, the crews usually include a couple of wizards and priests.

Ravens Bluff's navy grows during times of war by as many as 25 ships which belong to the city's lords. About a third of these match the statistics for the war galleons, with some minor modifications as far as weaponry and crew capability is concerned. Another third match the statistics for the smaller caravels. The rest are unique ships, most often being a particular lord's personal man-of-war.

The Sailors of Ravens Bluff's Navy

Since most of the city's fleet is either held in reserve or composed of the many ships belonging to the city's lords, it also follows that most naval personnel are either in the employ of the lords or are mercenaries hired by the city. Ravens Bluff's active naval force consists of 190 sailors and 300 soldiers.

The sailors are responsible for the day-to-day operation of the active duty naval force. They operate the large war ships and the caravels. Sailors are 0-level fighters, with 3-6 hit points. They usually wear no armor, but all naval vessels carry enough shields to outfit all sailors (AC 9). In combat, the sailors are equipped with short bows and arrows, which are used to soften opponents before boarding, and clubs and daggers.

For every 10 sailors there is a bosun, who is a 1st-level fighter (10 hp, AC 9), skilled in the use of daggers, clubs, short swords, and javelins. A large warship has seven or more bosuns, caravels have four to six. Then there is the bosun's mate, who is a 1st to 3rd-level fighter. He is in charge of all cargo, its proper storage, and keeps the ship's purse.

Each ship also has a standard complement of officers. They are: the third mate, a 2nd- to 4th-level fighter responsible for oar detail, crew morale, and mess rotation; second mate, a 3rd- to 5th-level fighter who is a good navigator and who is expected to keep the crew in line; the first mate, a 5th- to 7th-level fighter who is a master at arms and who gives orders when the captain is not available; and the captain. The captain is a 7th- to 9th-level fighter with many years of naval experience. He is a good navigator, knows his ship and crew well, and is an expert at naval combat. He is the ultimate authority aboard his ship, capable of meting swift punishment if necessary.

The 300 soldiers are responsible for guarding the reserve ships and supplying the three active ships with their required troop complements. They are well trained, disciplined, and led by competent officers. Each unit is identified by its respective banner. Naval regulars are 1st-level fighters (10 hp, AC 4) equipped with chainmail and a medium-sized shield emblazoned with their individual units' colors. The troops are led by sergeants, 2nd- or 3rd-level fighters.

A secret unit of the city's naval force consists of one dozen wereseals. They are all fighters of 5th-to 8th-level who voluntarily contracted lycanthropy to gain its special advantages. They report directly to Admiral Sir Willem Maximillian Fleetwood III.

Ravens Bluff's Harbor Patrol Force

Two caravels are manned and used by the harbor patrol, which is part of the city watch. These ships have a 30-person crew and a special combat force of 12. A harbormaster is on board to make sure that all ships coming and leaving the port facilities are made aware of all laws pertaining to sea commerce.

The Armies of Ravens Bluff

Ravens Bluff must be constantly vigilant of the hordes of humanoids that might swoop down upon it. To protect their city, the lords have established a mighty army, split over five wards. Each ward includes infantry and calvary units, and special forces such as griffon riders. The army's total active force comes to almost 1,000 men. In times of war, the active army would be reinforced with additional troops from the various lords and a militia, comprised of the many adventurers living in city. Further provisions exist to hire mercenary troops.

The Soldiers of Ravens Bluff's Army

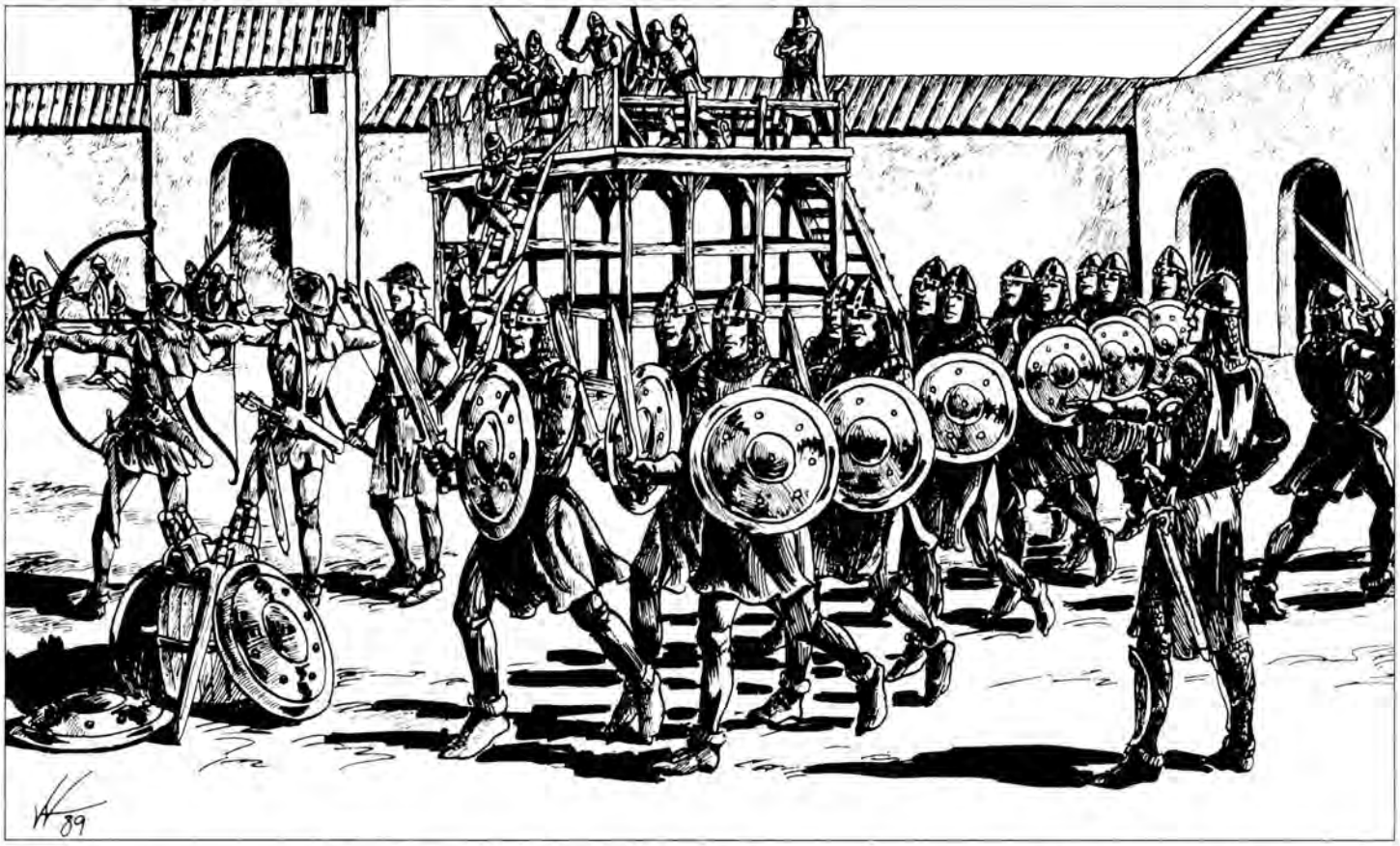
All troop types are organized into platoons which consist of 20 soldiers, 4 sergeants, and a lieutenant. Three infantry and one bowmen platoon combine to form a company, and a company contains 100 men—80 regulars, 16 sergeants, and 4 lieutenants, all led by a high commander. There are seven active duty companies, two of which are supported by a special 15-soldier scouting unit.

Light and heavy infantry soldiers are trained 1st-level fighters (4 to 10 hp) who are equipped with scale mail armor, a large shield emblazoned with their unit and company standards, a helmet, a short sword, a dagger, and a pole arm. Their primary purpose is to fight in ranks as a large unit by using their shields to build a defensive wall and striking at the enemy with their pole arms.

Heavy infantry troops wear splint mail armor, a helmet, and carry a medium shield emblazoned with their unit and company standards. A heavy infantry soldier's weapons consist of a dagger, long sword, morning star, and battle axe. They fight either in small groups as independent troops, or together as a complete unit—bringing the fight to the enemy.

Bowmen wear leather armor and cover their heads with a small helmet. They are equipped with a long bow, two score sheaf arrows and, in case the fight gets close, a short sword and dagger. The purpose of these units is to bury enemy forces under a flood of arrows (concentrated missile fire).

Troops are led by sergeants who are 2nd- or 3rd-level fighters. Infantry sergeants are equipped with banded mail armor, a medium-sized shield, and a helmet. They are specialized with the long sword and carry a dagger and a spear. Sergeants are promoted regulars who have demonstrated their skills and dedication through years of hard ser-



vice. There is a sergeant for every 10 regular soldiers. Lieutenants are 4th- or 5th-level fighters who are issued plate mail, a medium shield, and a helmet. They are armed with a weapon +1, with which they are also specialized. Lieutenants are experts at combat tactics and logistics, proven leaders with years of military experience. They are equipped with a war horse wearing chain barding. High commanders are 7th- to 9th-level fighters issued plate mail +1, a shield +1, and a weapon +2 in which they are specialized. They are experts at large-scale combat and guerrilla tactics, logistics, and siege planning. They relay the orders from the army general staff, and make sure that their troops follow them.

Scouts are either rangers or thieves with the scout kit, of 4th to 7th level of proficiency. They are well equipped by the city, which makes sure that its scouts are capable of completing their jobs in a magic dangerous world. Quite a few of these scouts are also members of the secretive society known as The Brotherhood, the elite organization of the Knights of the Hawk. They are dedicated to keeping the city officials well informed about political and military activities in the Vast. Ravens Bluff's army currently fields a force of about 30 scouts.

There are two generals. The first, General Sir Koran Therogeon, is in charge of all city-bound forces, and commands both of the city's garrison units. The second, General Briandon Lamachia Obespieri, or Ogrebane as he is called by the populous, commands the external forces, and the scout and patrolling operations.

In times of war, Ravens Bluff's army, like the navy, can further be augmented by about 2,900 combat troops belonging to the many city lords, and a 1,300-soldier reserve force. Combined with the 800-soldier active force, Ravens Bluff can field a massive 5,000-soldier army. In addition, this force can be further increased with 1,000 to 2,000 mercenaries, a commodity which Ravens Bluff has plenty of.

Ravens Bluff's Cavalry Forces

The fifth army ward is a cavalry unit. The light and medium forces are broken down into rides consisting of 20 regulars, four sergeants, and a knight commander. Cavalry regulars are 1st- and 2nd-level fighters proficient in shooting arrows from horseback. They wear chainmail, carry a medium shield covered by their unit standard, and wear a small helmet. Their armament consists of a long bow with two dozen sheaf arrows, a dagger, and a short sword. Medium cavalry regulars wear chainmail armor enhanced by breast plate, and their armament consists of a light lance, a long sword with which they are specialized, and either an axe or three javelins. They ride light warhorses of quality, (HD: 2+2; Hps 10-14; AC: 7; MV: 21). The Fast Riders, called this because of the speed with which they respond to trouble, ride into combat firing their arrows from horseback, and if needed, dismount to fight with their shield and sword.

The riders are led by cavalry sergeants, who are 3rd- to 5th-level fighters who wear chain mail and carry a medium shield covered with their standard. Sergeants are armed with a composite long bow and two dozen arrows, a long sword with which they are specialized, and either an axe or horseman's mace. Their horses have the same stats as for the troops. Each sergeant controls a 10-soldier squad and receives orders from the commander.

Light cavalry knight commanders are 6th- to 8th-level fighters who wear plate mail and carry a medium shield engraved with their battle crests, one of which is usually magical (+1 or better for minimum AC 1). On their head they wear large, ornate helmets that belay their high station. Their weapons include a long bow with two dozen arrows (12 are +1), a long sword with which they are specialized, and either javelins or a horseman's mace. Light cavalry knight commanders ride the best quality medium warhorses, which are protected by chain mail armor (HD: 3+3; Hps 18-22; AC: 3; MV: 16).

The medium cavalry knight commanders are 8th- to 10th-level fighters. They wear field plate armor and carry a medium shield +1 engraved with their battle crests. On their head they wear ornate great helms. Their weapons include a heavy lance, a long sword of at least +1 enchantment with which they are specialized, and either a battle axe or a horseman's mace.

The heavy cavalry forces, referred to as "The Iron Riders" has only one unit, consisting of 40 3rd- or 4th-level warriors and a knight commander. They wear field plate armor, carry a large round metal shield engraved with their family crests, and wear decorated helmets. They are armed with a heavy lance and a long sword. In addition, they also carry either a horseman's pick or a horseman's mace. Heavy cavalry warriors ride the best quality heavy warhorses, which are protected by chain mail armor (HD 4+4; Hps 24-30; AC 3; MV 13). The warriors are under the direct command of a heavy cavalry knight commander, Johan Copernicus Van Der Veen.

Ravens Bluff's special pride is her elite cavalry unit known as the Griffon Guard, and the Knights of the Griffon, mercenaries and local heroes who come to the city's aid as needed. There are 20 griffons and riders in the Griffon Guard detachment, and the number of Knights of the Griffon vary. All riders are at least 7th-level fighters who have the airborne riding proficiency. It is standard military policy to maintain at least a pair of these riders in the air at all times, even at night, to prevent assaults by the powerful enemies that might think the city an easy target.

Ravens Bluff's Fortifications

The city's army is spread over several fortified locations, including strongholds of the city's lords. And two large and well fortified structures double as troop garrisons in the southeast and northeast corners of the city. There are also two wilderness fortifications, and troops there guard the caravan routes going south and north.

The first of these fortresses is called Castle Iron Guard, which is the largest of the city's castles. It houses more than one third of the city's troops, plus a considerable amount of spellcasters. Ensconced there are the High Sorcerer—commander of The Guardians of the Celestial Mysteries—and several priests, including the army chaplain core's High Patriarch. Further, the secret headquarters of the forces known as "The Brotherhood," an inordinant amount of military equipment and livestock, and a large number of workers and tradesmen needed to keep such a large facility operational can be found inside. Built on top of an old dwarven keep, it has a very large underground complex that is used for storage. It has the city's largest stable, including a special pen which serves as a backup stable for griffons.

The second fortification is named Raven's Ridge Castle, and is located on one of the plateaus of the southeastern hills. A large part of the structure is built into the mountain. It houses the second of two company infantry wards, one of the two medium cavalry rides, a large population of army wizards and priests, the steeds and riders of the Griffon Guard, and a few dozen artisans and tradesmen. It boasts a pen where the griffons used by the griffon riders are stabled, and a small cave where General Therogeon's own steed, a silver dragon, makes its home. A large portion of the remaining army equipment and livestock is housed here. Because of its elevation, it has a very good view of the surrounding terrain, and it allows the keep's commander, General Sir Koran Therogeon, to observe any military move against the castle. It is also easily defended, and it is strategically positioned to support any troops in this part of the city.

The two smaller fortifications are about four miles outside the city limits and guard the caravan routes leading north and south. Belgard's Stand, a medium-sized keep, rests on a hill overseeing the caravan route to Tantras and the north. "The Stand," named after the great dwarven warrior Belgard Steelskin who died fighting a large band of orcs to give his fellow dwarves time to flee, houses one of the two 100-soldier infantry wards, a light and a medium cavalry ride, a scout complement, and several additional wizards, priests and adventurers. It is well supplied with livestock and equipment, and a nearby stream provides ample fresh water. This is also where Ravens Bluff's second army general—Briandon Lamachia Obespieri—holds his office. Obespieri, a ranger by trade, is in command of all operations outside the city limits in an area known as "the territories."

The second fort is relatively recent, built in the wilder wooded areas still surrounding the city. Construction of a true keep has been slow. However, a few large stone buildings, and the wall between two finished 40' stone towers show the city's intentions of making this another strong fortification. The last of the wards, two light cavalry units, a 10-soldier scout complement, and a considerable number of adventurers and tradesmen make their home in this growing community.

Equipment

No army can survive without supplies. The many lord's castles, the two forts in town, and the small forts in the countryside serve to house the bulk of the heavy military equipment. At last count, Ravens Bluff could deploy 10 heavy, 15 medium, and more than 20 light catapults. The city's ballistae count stands at 12 heavy, 16 medium, and 22 light units. Ravens Bluff also has a standard complement of lesser machines of destruction used during times of siege and defense maneuvers.

The army has nearly 100 wagons of various sizes. A small force of war chariots, kept in the fortress named Belgard's Stand, also gives the army an additional element of mobility. For sea transportation, the army depends on the navy, having only a score of small river skiffs, capable of carrying but a half dozen men each. These small boats are kept at special docks on the river, or are stored in barns at Castle Iron Guard.

There are 200 riding horses, and 200 light, 150 medium, and 80 heavy warhorses. In addition, the city has more than 400 pack and draft animals, which would be used to supply a campaign that required long distance travel. These numbers do not include the personal steeds of many of the lords and the well-to-do people who are part of the army.

Duties of the Active Army
In times of peace, the forces serve one main purpose—to intimidate any possible opponent so the city is not attacked. The city's cavalry serves as a rapid deployment force and is primarily there to deal with small groups that threaten merchants. Small bands of goblinoids often make raids on the many caravans and the less protected farming communities that dot the hills of Ravens Bluff's countryside.

Then there are the Zhentarim, the many bandits that make the Vast their home, and plenty of other threats to keep the military occupied. At least 50% of the cavalry units are constantly patrolling the immediate country surrounding the city.

Though the bulk of the troops are humans, more than 20% of the active and reserve army forces, and 35% of the mercenary forces that would join in times of war, are non-humans. Half-elves hold several high ranking positions. Dwarves are found among the heavy infantry forces, and they are often the sergeants that lead these units. While there are plenty of elves in Ravens Bluff, few have joined any of the military forces. Gnomes are much better represented in the infantry than in the navy. Many of them serve as engineers, being responsible for the many weapon systems the city possesses. There are some gnome infantry troops as well. Halflings form the smallest group of non-humans in the army. Their chaotic nature and lack of respect for authority makes it hard for them to be retained in the military. Plus, the demanding, dangerous, and tiresome lifestyle of troops just does not appeal to them. Ravens Bluff's army also counts a few half-orcs and centaurs.

The land-based military is run by a field general. After the retirement of Marcus Rubicon, this position was filled by Lord Charles Frederik LaVerne Blacktree IV.

Military Finances

It is obvious that such an army and navy, even with more than 70% of its forces and equipment held in reserve, is horrendously expensive to maintain. Most of the funds come from direct taxes upon the citizenry and Ravens Bluff's large cashes. A contingency to raise funds in the event of war is a special tax on magical items owned by Ravens Bluff residents.

Admiral Sir Willem Maximillian Fleetwood III (F12): THAC0 9; #AT 3/2; Dmg by weapon; AC 0; hp 80 MV 12; AL LN; MI *plate mail +3, two-handed sword of sharpness +3, periapt of proof against poison, ring of swimming*
S 16, D 10, C 15, I 12, W 16, Ch 14

Proficiencies: Two-handed sword (specialized), long sword, battle axe, heavy crossbow, dagger, trident, navigation (10), tactics (10), city laws (14), direction sense (17), survival-island (12), blind-fighting, rope use (10), seamanship (11), Common, Elvish

Admiral Fleetwood is a muscular balding man with an affinity for hard work. At the age of 40, he stands 5'9" tall and weights 170 pounds. People need to take but one look at the steel in his grey eyes to know that he is a serious and dedicated man. He disdains pomp, but in public he wears his magical armor. His many decorations—enough to cover his chest and back—are left at home in a glass case.

Sir Willem's vast knowledge of all manner of sea- and land-based fighting tactics makes him the best suited person for determining, planning, and executing military operations. He is determined to keep the ships in the best possible shape.

The admiral has always loved the ocean and military life, a combination he enjoys in his present position. A born leader, he rose through the ranks with such speed that he often became suspected of committing foul play or pulling his weight, as his family is one of the richest in Ravens Bluff. However, nothing could be farther from the truth. He was to inherit and run the massive estate of his family—but on the condition that he did things the way his father wanted. Joining the military was not on the agenda. Fleetwood left his family—and gave up any chance of an inheritance—because he could not deal with the petty squabbles and moral compromises that where made in the name of better business and more money.

Fleetwood's father, even though secretly proud, realized that his son would not come back begging. An attempt to discredit his son backfired, terminating the small bond that still existed between Willem and his father. While this manipulation resulted in Willem's brilliant career slowing down a little, and Lord Calvin Longbottle getting the position of Regent of the Harbor, Willem remained loyal and steadfast to the military.

The admiral has become a harsh but just man, demanding only the best from his troops, and giving them his best. He is loyal to Mayor O'Kane and his commander Lord Longbottle, but he will not hesitate to argue with them when he feels that they are not in the right.

Admiral Fleetwood's only activity outside the navy is his dedication to his son, who serves aboard one of the ships as an infantry lieutenant.

General Sir Koran Therogeon (F15): THAC0 6; #AT 2; Dmg by weapon; AC –2; hp 92; MV 12; AL LG; MI: *field plate mail +3, long sword +3 (frostbrand), large bag of holding, ring of fire resistance, winged boots*
S 14, D 12, C 16, I 14, W 15, Ch 12

Proficiencies: Long sword (special-

ized), two-handed battle axe, Common, Dwarvish composite long bow, bastard sword, riding land-based (18) and airborne (13), tactics (14), mountaineering, animal lore (12), blind-fighting

General Koran Therogeon is a muscular man who has begun to show a belly, which he tries hard to hide. At 45 years of age, Therogeon is 6'4" tall and weights 240 pounds. His grey hair is worn in a long braided tail, which is decorated with fine silver wire and dropped over his right shoulder. Therogeon's hazel eyes reflect discipline and experience. He is a military man in the strictest sense, never seen in public out of uniform, which shows him to be a highly-decorated Knight of the Raven.

Sir Therogeon, general of Ravens Bluff's city fortifications, is the battlefield commander in charge of all army forces within city walls. This puts him over almost two-thirds of the active forces. Not an easy job, Therogeon admits, while he adds that he is constantly understaffed and lacking in other resources. Despite his frequent grumblings, Therogeon's vast knowledge of all matters concerning land-based fighting tactics makes him the best suited person for determining, planning, and executing of all army operations. Still, General Therogeon is still bound to the command of the army's field general, his direct superior—Lord Blacktree—and is expected to consult with his commander on all major operations.

During times of peace, he is constantly inundated with petty, but necessary routine work, which has forced him away from the constant self-imposed rigors that kept him in shape.

Therogeon is the son of Lord Basaltheus Therogeon, one of Ravens Bluff's first lords to swear allegiance to Mayor O'Kane. To show his dedication to the cause, the elder Therogeon gave a large portion of his personal troops to the command that was responsible for the organization of Ravens Bluff's army—including offering his own son as a well experienced commander.

Young Lord Therogeon quickly and effectively distinguished himself in the many campaigns that followed. During one of the great battles in which the masses of goblinoids attempted to take the many riches of the then bustling port town, then Knight Commander Therogeon met up with a strange man whom later turned out to be a silver dragon. The dragon was so surprised at the devotion and dedication this man had to the troops, that he joined the commander for that great battle—and afterward forged a partnership of convenience that has lasted for more than a decade.

General Therogeon loves to fly—whether on the back of his dragon friend or simply with the aid of his magical boots. In fact, whenever he finds a free moment, he takes to the skies. He is a married man with six children, who often get overlooked because he is busy with his soldiers.

His dedication and effectiveness has carried him to the highest ranks of command, earning him an elevation in knighthood to the prestigious Order of the Raven, and some think he may even rise to attain considerable political power, perhaps succeeding O'Kane.

General Briandon Lamachia Obespieri a.k.a. Ogrebane (R12): THAC0 0; #AT 3/2; Dmg by weapon; AC 2; hp 88; MV 12 AL NG; MI *leather armor +4, scimitar +4, scimitar of speed +2, five javelins of lightning, horn of Valhalla, cloak of the chameleon*
S 14, D 12, C 16, I 14, W 15, Ch 12

Proficiencies: Long sword, short sword, long bow, throwing axe, dagger, spear, scimitar, javelin, weather sense (14), tracking (15), survival-forest (14), running (10), endurance, Turmish, Common, Elvish

General Briandon Lamachia Obespieri is an incredibly muscular man (5'10" tall, 237 pounds) of 35 years. He has piercing black eyes and jet hair. He got his nickname from the large number of ogres that have fallen under his blade. Although he is a military man, he prefers the outdoors, and is often out of uniform. He is prone to wearing his old magical leather armor, and frequently wanders the countryside in the company of his troops—searching for the ever elusive bandits and goblinoids that make the roads to Ravens Bluff dangerous. His only flair is the bright green cloak of the chameleon that he is never without.

Although now a Knight of the Griffon, he was first a Knight of the Hawk, and has remained so at heart. The fact that he is an experienced ranger skilled in combat makes him the perfect candidate for the difficult position of commander of all non-city forces. General Obespieri freely associates with his subordinates, including those at Belgard's Stand and the new fortification being built on the road to Tantras. He can often be found among patrolling units, usually as an observer, watching the commander lead his troops.

General Obespieri enjoys the rigors of military life, and he can often be found right along the common recruit digging trenches or doing some other form of hard manual labor. This has endeared him to his troops, and has made up for any problems that his more laid-back attitude might have caused.

However, Obespieri likely will not remain in this post for very long, as he is already getting bored with the post. Still, he is dedicated, and he will not resign his post unless he feels the city has a successor that can take up where he left off.

The general loves horseback riding, and owns several price steeds. These are but a few of the many animals that he has collected during his lifetime. He owns several birds of prey, a score of war dogs, and even an elven cat.

Born in the city of Waterdeep to a pair of young adventurers, he moved with his family to Ravens Bluff when they emigrated to the wilder lands. His father a ranger, and his mother a priestess of Mielikki, he grew up surrounded by nature. While he did associate with

other people, they where often commoners, and manners where not of such great importance. Thus he grew up without any guidance in etiquette, a sore point with many of the nobles in Ravens Bluff. But Briandon's honesty and sincerity were immediately noticed by then Lord Marshal Rubicon, who knowing that he was to retire soon, sought out the most skilled and effective commanders to run his army upon his leaving. Obespieri's knowledge of the wilder lands around the city finally earned him the post of general.

Lady Caroline Skyhawk, Commander of the Griffon Ride (F8, noble kit): THAC0 13; #AT 3/2; Dmg by weapon; AC 0; hp 75; MV 12; AL NG; MI: *Chain mail +3, long sword +3, griffon barding +2, ring of feather falling, brooch of shielding*
S 16, D 10, C 15, I 16, W 10, Ch 14, Cm 17

Weapon Proficiencies: Specialized with long sword, bastard sword, battle axe, heavy lance, dagger

Non-weapon Proficiencies: Riding (airborne), riding (land based), blind-fighting, etiquette, heraldry, local history, long sword specialization, dancing, animal handling (horse, griffon), Common, Elvish

A petite 28-year-old woman of but 5' 2" and some 120 well muscled pounds, Lady Caroline Skyhawk is commander of the griffon ride. Her long, braided and decorated red hair complements her freckled skin and enhances her sea - green eyes, making them stand out even when not painted. A true socialite, she is often seen in expensive dress, but she also dons the armor of a warrior with ease and grace. Her armor, a splendid example of craftsmanship, is known throughout the city and clearly identifies Lady Caroline Skyhawk as a highly decorated Knight of the Griffon and the commander of the griffon riders.

As the commander of the griffon ride, Lady Skyhawk is responsible for scheduling all unit operations. While these operations normally are planned by the high command, Lady Caroline Skyhawk is responsible for their execution. Lady Caroline Skyhawk is also responsible for the maintenance of all the griffons and the equipment used by the force.

In addition, Skyhawk acts as an army ambassador, frequenting the important social occasions as a means of promoting the army with the city's nobles and lords. During these functions, she can often be found exerting her full charms on whatever person or organization is causing problems for the army. However, she is a woman of high morals and does not take well to insults or suggestions that she be open with her favors to achieve these goals.

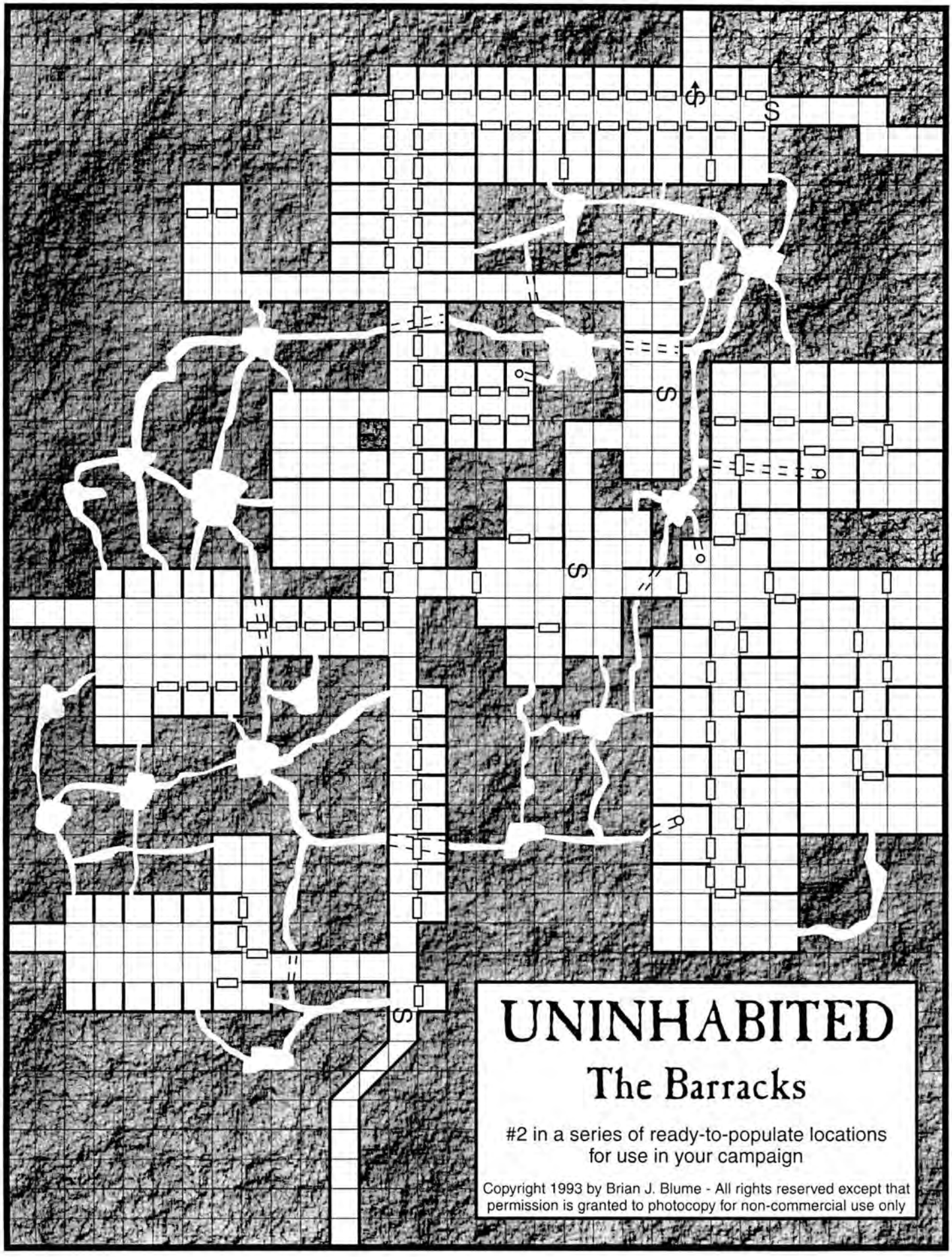
Lady Skyhawk is both an exceptional lady and warrior. Born to nobility, she always had the best at her disposal: the best education, the best equipment, the best food, and the best moral guidance possible in the person of her grandfather; Lord Mandrak Shafir Skyhawk, Knight of the Dove. From him Lady Caroline learned that the world is a hard place and that only a person with strong morals and a dedication to duty could achieve success. Thus she began to dream about how she would change the world for the best.

Caroline's father was a powerful merchant, was often away on trips, and her mother a politician, spent most of her time in the Council of Lords. Thus she grew up listening to the only member of the family able to give her the attention she craved: her grandfather, Lord Mandrak Shafir Skyhawk. Lord Skyhawk, a Knight of the Dove retired after four decades of adventuring in the name of Selune. Filled with wisdom and a desire to change the world into a place where all men could achieve peace and prosperity, Mandrak Skyhawk passed many a moment telling his granddaughter about his dreams for a better world. It came to no surprise then to those that knew about the special relationship between grandfather and granddaughter that the young Lady Skyhawk would attempt to follow in her grandfather's steps. At the tender age of 17 she joined the city's military. However, things did not turn out the way she wanted them, and soon she was exposed to the horrifying brutality of war. This barbaric experience, followed by the passing away of her grandfather, forever changed her view of the world, hardening her to the evil that men can do, and molding her into a more defined person with her feet firmly planted upon the ground.

Caroline soon proved her value as a tactician, and with her inordinate skills at aerial combat, she owned her own griffon and knew how to fly it well, was chosen to create the griffon ride some eight years ago. Not only was she successful, but her creation gave Ravens Bluff one of the most powerful defensive and offensive forces in its military.

Lady Skyhawk has never married, because she has found no man who matches the noble traits exemplified by her grandfather. However, she has not given up and still has hopes of meeting the right man some day.

Lady Skyhawk is free with her money, and—because of her well-to-do family—she has a large amount of money to be free with, spending it to gain the better things in life. Her desire for the highest possible quality in all material things, a need she feels is a direct indication of her station, might be considered her only true weakness. As an officer, she has the privilege of choosing where she lives when not on duty. Thus she still resides in the mighty castle of her family, spending time in her luxuriously decorated military quarters only when on duty. ❑



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Spath Investigations

Detectives in the Living City

by Robert Wiese

A small wooden plaque near the door to this old-looking wood and stone structure reads, "Spath Investigations." This is the only indication a passerby receives that within can be found the best detective firm in all of Ravens Bluff.

Spath specializes in the private investigation of almost any problem, from looking into a prospective son-in-law's antecedents, to finding a lost relative, to recovery of stolen property—and more. If you need someone tailed, want your wrongly-accused sister cleared of murder, or want to know what the Lord Mayor ate for breakfast, Tevlo Spath and his operatives can handle it.

Spath also provides temporary guards for persons or consignments of goods. Further, Spath will also engage to screen and hire adventurers for clients who wish to remain anonymous or uninvolved. Spath's clients can count on the utmost discretion.

Spath Investigations refuses to take cases that involve criminal activities, such as assassination, theft, etc. The Spath operatives will, however, use illegal means to handle cases. For example, they do not consider breaking into residences or shops criminal—even though it is illegal—because such is only done to search for clues, recover stolen goods, or rescue kidnap victims, activities Spath sees as justified. "Criminal," according to Spath, is defined by motivations, not just actions.

The majority of the cases Spath Investigations undertakes are for poor people who rarely cover expenses. These cases are subsidized largely by the smaller number of wealthy patrons that hire Spath. This is a fine arrangement in Spath's view, as he started the business to serve poor and honest folk who could not or would not use such resources. When ends are not met, Spath pays his employees from his own wealth, acquired over his years as an adventurer. Most of the operatives also engage in freelance activities to boost their income—activities that are seldom reported to Spath.

The informant network that Spath has created is truly awe-inspiring. With his easy way of making friends, Spath has numerous acquaintances and contacts in many levels of Ravens Bluff society, from government officials to dock workers to thieves and smugglers. It is 90% probable that Spath has at least one contact almost anywhere, or associated with any type of activity, and usually more than one.

In addition, Spath employs on a temporary basis other thieves and informants who can provide specialized knowledge. Consider all of Ravens Bluff as home territory for Spath's information gathering proficiency. Spath also has many contacts in other cities around the Sea of Fallen Stars.

On a permanent basis, Spath employs several operatives. Each of these people can handle most cases, but each has a specialty that Spath regularly employs. Yys Fech, a bounty hunter, specializes in tracking missing people. Taor Vuel, a former (?) cat burglar, can get into almost any building and is expert at finding important clues or recovering stolen items. Ryph Asn trains and assigns bodyguards. Spath's wife, Adeline, handles the office paperwork, finances, and makes appointments. For extra help on certain cases, Spath may hire part-time help, including other thieves and adventurers.

Spath sees people by appointment only, and arrangements must be made with Adeline Spath at least a day in advance. Before an interview, Spath investigates the prospective client. He is usually so well informed about what the client wants that he can say, "As to your request, I believe we can help you" before the client even states his or her problem.

Spath has two categories of rates: one for normal townsfolk, those who could not otherwise afford these types of services; another for wealthy people, the government, and well-to-do adventurers.

Within the first category the rates are pretty stable, but for those who fall into the second category, the rates vary by how much the client can afford, how dangerous the job is, how much Spath likes the client, etc. Rates are 1-2 gp per day in category one and 20-50 gp per day (and up) in category two. Fees do not include expenses, though Spath does not refuse a poor client who cannot pay his expenses.

The wealthy usually pay Spath's rates, even if they are significantly higher than shown above, for three reasons: he is usually successful and always discreet, he is a much better value than the adventurers one could hire for what Spath charges, and he is a legitimate businessman and associating with him does not discredit clients nor endanger them with the law. For good friends or extremely needy people, Spath may even lower his fees below the one gp level, as this helps his public image.

Spath Investigations Offices

Note that all windows can be shuttered, and the shutters locked from the inside (–10% chance to pick locks). All doors have a single good lock (–10% chance to pick open) unless otherwise stated.

Reception: This is where all prospective clients and visitors are received. During office hours, Adeline Spath sits at the desk. The desk holds only a few papers aside from interview schedules. While Adeline does all her work here, the sensitive stuff is stored elsewhere. A couch and matching chair are provided for visitors. The front door has a double lock, and both locks are good (-25% chance to pick open).

Taor Vuel's Office: The only furniture here are Taor's desk and chair, plus two other chairs. The bookcase behind Taor's desk displays no books, but is used to hold whatever clues Taor is examining, his weapons when he is not wearing them, extra daggers, and odd knick-knacks. The desk has one drawer, which is usually empty.

Tevlo Spath's Office: Aside from the desk, there is a couch in this room. It is usually used by Tevlo for taking naps, or to pile things on (he is not a tidy person). The desk has three drawers, and they are all locked. The financial records and day-to-day stuff can be found herein, along with current notes that have not been taken to the secret cellar yet. The

cabinet has four drawers holding disguise materials, extra weapons, and other tools of his trade.

Yys Fech's Office: There is only a desk and chair in this room, because Yys never sees clients himself and rarely conducts any of his business inside. The desk has one drawer, which holds a few scraps of parchment, extra stilettos, and rope and such for binding criminals who must be taken alive. The door to the back is locked with two locks; both are excellent, like the front door locks. The secret crawl-way cannot be accessed on this floor of the building at all, either from this office or from the outside.

Conference Room: A place for the operatives to talk with clients, or for the operatives to have conferences over cases. There is nothing in here except the table and chairs shown on the map.

Kitchen: There are tables and cupboards in this room. The door to the cellar has a lock on it, but is rarely locked. The dumbwaiter is a platform attached to a rope for sending food up to the dining room above. It does not go down to the cellar.

Dining Room: A table and chairs are the only furnishings here.

Spath Bedroom: Tevlo and Adeline sleep here. They have a double bed with quilt comforter, and a dresser. On top of the dresser are two water basins, and a mirror is mounted on the wall above the basins. The dresser contains their personal effects and clothing. The trap door to the secret cellar is very well hidden, and the bed must be moved three feet to uncover all of it.

Ryph Asn's Bedroom: Ryph does not have an office downstairs, since he does not need one. He keeps all his own belongings in the trunk and uses the book case to display his collection of ceramic figures (a small collection, and not valuable, but Ryph loves the figures with a passion). There is also a water basin on a stand.

Yys Fech's Bedroom: Yys's bookcase is a gruesome testament to his long career as a bounty hunter. He has collected personal effects from almost all of his victims and displays them here. He also displays prominently, as a reminder to himself, a locket that belonged to the wizard's daughter that he accidentally killed. The bed is very plain, and the trunk holds only clothing, grooming items, and a few things that he received from his parents. There is a small mirror above the water basin.

Taor Vuel's Bedroom: By far the sparsest of the sleeping rooms, Taor has only a bed, trunk, and water basin. He does not have a mirror, as he does not like to look at himself all the time. The trunk contains only clothing, as Taor keeps all his tools in his *Vest of Holding*.

Cellar: The main part of the cellar is used for storage of food and other household necessities. There is usually enough dried food and water to feed the whole staff for two weeks, in addition to the day-to-day items.

Secret Cellar: The secret cellar is entirely separate from the cellar proper. It exists solely to hold the secret files that Spath maintains on his cases and the people in Ravens Bluff. Much of the information stored here would be very dangerous if circulated. To get to the secret room, one must use the trap door from the Spath bedroom and climb down the building supports. There is a magical glyph at the bottom of the passage, above the cellar ceiling. Failure to say its name before passing it results in the intruder being trapped in the crawl way as a door slides across the crawl way 10 feet above the glyph, closing off the passage, and the trap door into the cellar locks with an exceptional lock (-40% chance to pick). When the glyph is triggered, a gem that Spath carries glows red and feels warm, warning him of intruders. The only ones who know the command word for the glyph are Tevlo and Adeline Spath, and the wizard who cast the glyph in the first place.

NPC thief kits and starred non-weapon proficiencies below are from the *Complete Thief's Handbook*.

Tevlo Spath (T11): THAC0 15; Dmg by weapon; AC –1, 3; hp 43; MV 12; AL NG; MI: *Bracers of defense AC 3, short sword +2, ring of invisibility*
S 14, D 18, C 12, I 16, W 13, Ch 17

Weapon Proficiencies: Dagger, punching specialization, short bow, short sword
Non-Weapon Proficiencies: Alertness* (14), Common, disguise (16), etiquette (17), fast-talking* (17), information gathering* (16), observation* (16), read/write common (17), tracking (13), trailing* (18), voice mimicry* (17), Investigator Kit

Thief Skills: PP 40%, OL 72%, FT 70%, HS 79%, HS 72%, DN 82%, CW 92%, RL 65%

At age 48, 5'9" height, 153 pounds, and with light brown hair and neutral brown eyes, Tevlo Spath has an unremarkable appearance purposely wears plain clothing to decrease his chances of being noticed. He is a wonderful actor, besides being very friendly and outgoing, and has an ability to make friends among almost any class of people. Tevlo loves to spend off time in bars and roaming town, increasing his already large circle of friends and contacts and telling stories from his adventuring days.

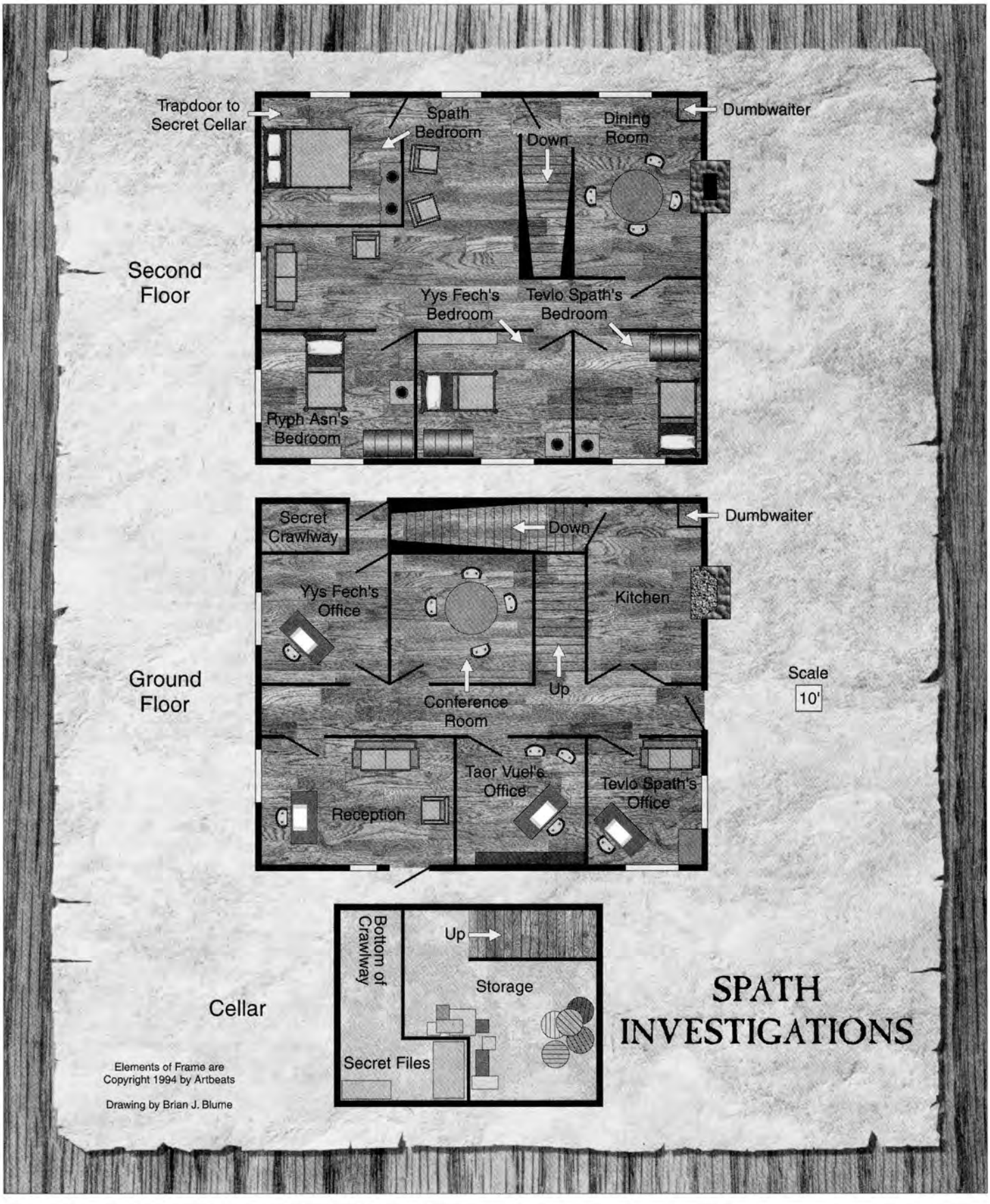
Born in Ravens Bluff to a tailor and his wife, he left town with a group of adventurers at the first opportunity upon reaching the age of 16. He had many dangerous adventures and became a first class thief. However, he tired of the wandering life and moved back to Ravens Bluff about five years ago. He first worked with the town watch, but that was not exciting enough, so he did some quiet thievery. He noticed, during this time, that certain people employed thieves and such as informants, but that most law abiding people did not have access to this kind of service. Also, while some wealthy people hired adventurers to solve their more complex problems, many lower class honest folk could not afford this. Perceiving a chance to make money and help people, he opened Spath Investigations to provide these services to those who could not otherwise get them. After some success, he expanded the business to the present size. Three years ago he married Adeline Voy.

He is extremely wealthy from his adventuring career, and runs the business more for excitement than for desire for wealth.

Adeline Voy Spath (F0): THAC0 20; Dmg by weapon; AC 10; hp 4; MV 12; AL LG; MI
S 9, D 11, C 10, I 15, W 11, Ch 15

Weapon Proficiencies: None

Non-Weapon Proficiencies: Common, Elven, read/write Common (16)
Adeline is an attractive woman with an outgoing manner, and she is pleasant to be around. At 32 years, she stands 5'6"


Trapdoor to Secret Cellar
Spath Bedroom
Down
Dining Room
Dumbwaiter
Second Floor
Yys Fech's Bedroom
Tevlo Spath's Bedroom
Ryph Asn's Bedroom
Secret Crawlway
Down
Dumbwaiter
Yys Fech's Office
Kitchen
Ground Floor
Conference Room
Up
Scale
10'
Taor Vuel's Office
Tevlo Spath's Office
Reception
Bottom of Crawlway
Up
Storage
Cellar
Secret Files
SPATH INVESTIGATIONS
Elements of Frame are Copyright 1994 by Artbeats
Drawing by Brian J. Blume

tall and weights 123 pounds. Her hair is blond and her eyes green. She dresses in fine gowns and expensive hats, and has a liking for expensive but unostentatious jewelry.

As a child, Adeline was continually put down by her parents, who already had too many (four) children when Adeline was born. She grew up with the idea that she had no value, and this attitude was reinforced during her years as a tavern serving girl. It was not until her marriage that she began to see that she had some worth. Her self-esteem has improved greatly in the last three years, but she still is haunted by occasional feelings of inadequacy.

Adeline was born and raised in Ravens Bluff, working at various inns and taverns until she met Tevlo Spath. When they were married she took the post of receptionist/accountant at Spath Investigations, two things she is very skilled in. She does not desire to become an operative, though she is not adverse to "asking around" on occasion among the people she knows.

Yys Fech "the Merciless" (T7): THAC0 17; Dmg by weapon; AC 4, 6 rear; hps 28; MV 12; AL N; MI: *Leather armor +2, broad sword +1/+3 vs lycanthropes, five +1 bolts, two bolts of slaying wizards*
S 18, D 16, C 12, I 13, W 12, Ch 12

Weapon Proficiencies: Broad sword, short sword, stiletto, light crossbow

Non-Weapon Proficiencies: Common, disguise (11), dog training (12), herbalism (11), read/write common (14), Thieves' Cant, tracking (15), Bounty Hunter Kit

Thief Skills: PP 40%, OL 42%, FT 46%, MS 51%, HS 50%, DN 48%, CW 71%, RL 17%

Yys Fech (pronounced Ees Fek) is a menacing looking man, 6' 2" tall, 185 lbs, with dark hair and eyes. He never looks cheerful, and always has a slightly predatory look on his face which makes people nervous. He wears dark clothing and dark colored leather armor, and carries both a broad sword and a short sword. He is renowned for two things: successfully tracking down his prey, and bringing them back dead if there is a choice in the matter. Hence his nickname "Fech the Merciless."

Born in Waterdeep, Yys excelled early at his chosen profession, and though he is not the best bounty hunter in the Realms he is well respected. A few years ago, Yys traveled to Ravens Bluff on business and ran into an old acquaintance, Tevlo Spath. Spath took him into the business to handle the "find the lost relative" cases, work which Yys finds satisfying but not as enjoyable as bounty hunting. Yys is very mysterious about his past, but this is due to embarrassment more than anything else. He is the third son of a farmer, but since farmer's sons do not in general send shivers down the spines of fleeing evildoers he doesn't mention it.

He has been well satisfied with his life for the most part. There was only one incident in his life that he does regret. He was hired to find the murderer of a merchant's wife. He tracked the man and found that the murderer was in the employ of a wizard, and in trying to extract the murderous lackey he ran afoul of the wizard's magic. After acquiring three *Bolts of Slaying Wizards,* he returned to the keep and recovered the criminal. He killed the wizard in the process, and accidentally killed the wizard's daughter. He has never, to this day, forgiven himself for that killing, and works very hard now to prevent the deaths of "innocent bystanders" while on manhunts.

Taor Vuel (T6, burglar): THAC0 18; Dmg by weapon; AC 3, 6 rear; hp 19; MV 12; AL CG; MI *Ring of protection +2, vest of holding* (see below)
S 13, D 17, C 9, I 14, W 16, Ch 8

Weapon Proficiencies: Dagger, short bow, martial arts proficiency

Non-Weapon Proficiencies: Alertness* (17), appraising (14), Common, fast-talking* (8), information gathering* (14), jumping (13), locksmithing* (17), looting* (17), rope use (17), tightrope walking (17)

Thief Skills: PP 18%, OL 75%, FT 49%, MS 51%, HS 45%, DN 35%, CW 80%, RL 12%

Taor Vuel (pronounced Tay-or Vul) is a somewhat ugly man, chiefly because of a scar across his face from a childhood disease. The scar looks sort of like a burn. Taor is very self-conscious about it, and endeavors to sit in shaded parts of rooms, and takes other precautions so that his face is not fully visible. At 29, he is 5'8" tall, weighs 147 pounds, and has black hair and brown eyes.

Taor decided early in life that taking things was the only way he would ever have things, so he devoted his life to burglary, learning locksmithing in addition to his thieving talents. He wandered to Ravens Bluff, and began doing freelance jobs. Spath hired him a few times, and, liking what he saw of Taor's talents, took him on permanently. While he is less greedy now than he was, he still has trouble resisting the occasional temptation while on a job. Tevlo is patiently trying to break him of this habit, as it is not good for business.

Taor is a great believer in using tools to make his jobs easier, and has many specialized tools for thieving. His favorites are a folding bow and grapple arrows, but assume that he has any tool that would be ideal for a given situation. He wears a Vest of Holding, which has four pockets that each act as a small bag of holding (100 lbs and 10 cubic feet capacity each). He stores all his tools in the Vest, and just pulls out what he needs.

Ryph Asn (F6): THAC0 18; Dmg by weapon; AC 5; hp 42; MV 12; AL NG
S 16, D 11, C 15, I 14, W 13, Ch 11

Weapon Proficiencies: Broad sword (specialization), belaying pin, light crossbow, wrestling specialization

Non-Weapon Proficiencies: Common, cooking (14), direction sense (14), fire building (12), fishing (12), gaming (11), hunting (12), riding—horse(16), seamanship (12), survival—mountains (14), weather sense (12)

Ryph Asn (pronounced Rif As) is a large (6'1", 170 pounds) and friendly man who loves life and lives it to the full. He has a short brown beard that he keeps trimmed, wavy hair, a nice boyish smile, and expressive eyes that flash and soften with his moods. He is never seen without his chain mail and broad sword. He doesn't get along well with Yys Fech, finding him too moody and depressing. Ryph is 26 years old.

Ryph Asn is actually Jorn Bru, a fugitive from justice. In his homeland, Ryph was a fine fighter and local hero, until at the age of 17 he accidentally killed the town sheriff. As there were no witnesses he had to flee, and lived in the mountains for several years. Then he was found out and a posse from his home town came after him, forcing him again to flee, this time to the sea. He

joined a merchant ship crew, and later a pirate crew. It was while on the pirate ship that he arrived in Ravens Bluff. Tevlo Spath found him in a bar fight near the waterfront, and, impressed with his skills, promptly made him an offer of a job. Glad to enter more honest work, he eagerly accepted. Ryph has been with Spath ever since, training private guards and handling the bodyguard service end of the business, at which he has proved quite competent. He is still wanted, though, and keeps a watch out for people who might recognize him.

Adventure Hooks

Spath Investigations is a place where PC thieves can earn a few coins between adventures or receive training. Many of the jobs that Spath would hire a temporary thief for could easily launch a new adventure, or series of adventures. Here are some ideas:

◆ For several months the agents of Spath Investigations have been working against a group of Zhentarim in Ravens Bluff. This group of Zhentarim has been trying to influence trade and promote chaos by masterminding thefts all over town. Spath agents have been slowly collecting information and are about ready to strike at the leader of this group when one of the agents is kidnapped. Spied upon themselves and unable to effect a rescue of the operative, Spath secretly hires the PCs to find the operative and smash the Zhentarim organization. This could lead the player characters as far as Zhentil Keep itself, and deep into the plots of the Zhentarim Black Network. Or it could just lead across town and into a gang war that threatens to tear the city apart.

◆ Spath is hired to investigate the murder of a merchant by the parents of the boy accused of the crime. At the trial, the boy is found guilty (he was framed) but the Merchant Guild is not satisfied. The Guild hires the PCs to check into the matter. Spath's operatives and the PCs, while working on the same case, continually cross paths, not always pleasantly. It could turn out that the Merchant Guild itself, or a rival organization, is behind the murder. If the Guild is behind the death, then they might have hired the PCs to foul up the Spath investigation.

◆ An agent of a minor thief organization in Ravens Bluff is ordered to infiltrate Spath Investigations and find out what Spath knows about the group. The agent gets hired for temporary work, and looks around without finding anything. Finally, using charm magic or hypnosis, he gets Adeline Spath to tell him about the secret files and the command word to bypass the glyph. The agent breaks into the secret files and finds what he is after. He also finds some very private information on some important people. So, without telling his fellow thieves, he sets himself up in the blackmail business. However, one of this guy's victims turns around and hires Spath Investigations to find the blackmailer. Spath undertakes the case himself, and determines that the blackmailer could only have gotten the information from the secret files (if nothing else, he finds that his secret files have been ransacked). Tevlo realizes that it must have been an inside job, and suspects Adeline since she is the only one who could have gotten into the file cellar without setting off the glyph. Not wanting to believe this of his own wife, whom he loves, Tevlo secretly hires the adventurers to investigate his own firm and find out what really happened.

The adventurers would certainly want to check out the Spath Investigations offices and examine the personal effects of the employees, and check the access to the secret files. They might have to break in to do this, as they do not want to arouse any questions among the employees. They would also have to delicately question the employees, and gather any background from family and friends that they could. They can tail the various operatives for days before finally realizing that none of them is the blackmailer. Then they could trace the real villain in one or more different ways. Perhaps they check on all the recent temporary employees, or perhaps they discover the use of magic on Adeline by the blackmailer, or perhaps another clue presents itself. They find, however, that he has fled his normal haunts. Meanwhile, the blackmailer's group finds out somehow what is going on and wants to get to their rogue fellow before the PCs or the law. They would certainly throw obstacles in the PCs' path.

If the adventurers eventually capture the blackmailer, they would probably earn the enmity of the group he is a part of. There could also be political consequences for the adventurers, depending on whether they recover the files and what they do with them. Perhaps the files themselves lead to another adventure.

◆ The PCs might also find themselves in need of the services of Spath Investigations. Spath's operatives and sources of information can help out any party, providing background information or tailing suspects while the PCs are involved with other activities.

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Weasel Games

Troubling Friends

by Lester Smith

Sure, Hollywood gives Oscars for best supporting actor. But everybody knows that the starring role is where it's really at. And when was the last time you found a secondary character in a novel more memorable than the protagonist or chief villain? We naturally identify with primary characters, so practiced authors make them the most vivid. In part, this fixation on stars is just the way we are hard-wired: We each play the leading role in our own life's saga, so it's only natural for our player characters to each want the spotlight when we role-play. But in role-playing sessions, PCs are almost always called upon to function as a team—at least if they want to survive.

Fortunately, we can have the best of both worlds—if we are careful. We can play cooperatively, while still allowing a bit of weasel in our characters. The trick is to know how much is enough, and what is too much.

Here's a tip: If you're playing a weasel and you're the only one having fun, it's too much. All too often, inexperienced or selfish players get their jollies from wreaking havoc with a campaign, and all they accomplish is to make themselves a pariah.

It's a special temptation for thief characters, who frequently feel the need to put one over on those cocky fighters and self-important mages by lifting some item from them. As discussed in last month's column, that sort of action is potentially destructive, because players of the victims are likely to feel violated personally. But if the resulting conflict is role-played seriously, it can add depth to a campaign, facing the PCs with a choice between breaking up or apologizing and forgiving, thereby forging deeper bonds of friendship.

Of course, while it is natural for thieves to bring conflict into a party, there is nothing keeping other characters from generating their own dramatic tension.

I am reminded, for example, of a merchant's son that one of my best friends played in an old *The Fantasy Trip* campaign. My buddy Jim had put a lot of background thought into the character from the beginning. He had decided that Markus was the son of a merchant from across the sea, and just before the campaign's start, he had been sent on his first trade voyage in command of one of his father's ships, but the crew had mutinied and stolen cargo, ship, and all, leaving the young man adrift in a dinghy. Now his major goals in life were to earn enough money to make up for the cargo he had lost and, if possible, to find and punish his wayward crew. That history lent the character a lot of personality. But it didn't stop there. Once the campaign started, Jim decided that Markus had a distinct dislike for mine. I was playing Jaston Mikelson, a stolid, unimaginative warrior whose sense of duty had earned him a captaincy in the city guard, but who wasn't bright enough to go any higher. Jim didn't tell me that Markus despised Jaston; only the GM was in on the secret.

War boomerangs are powerful arms in TFT, especially when used by someone possessing the Missile Weapons talent, as Jim's merchant did. But Jim is legendary for his poor luck when rolling dice*. Frequently then, when Jaston was involved in combat with an enemy—typically outnumbered, because he had a tendency to rush in without thinking—a boomerang would come flying past him unexpectedly and strike his foe. Time after time after combat Jaston would pat his merchant friend on the back and praise him soundly for his help. It wasn't until the campaign's end, when our party members were all being rewarded by some great king for all the good they had done that I learned that Markus had been trying all along to hit my character, and had simply failed his roll each time, accidentally striking Jaston's foes instead. As my guardsman solemnly accepted his reward from the king, I noticed Jim becoming increasingly agitated, and when the Markus's turn to be lauded came, Jim laid his head on the table and sobbed in character, "I've been trying to kill you the whole time, but you just wouldn't die!"

I was stunned at the revelation, the moreso given that I was very much into the mind set of my rather thick-witted PC. But, also keeping in character, I rested a hand upon Jim's shoulder, saying, as fervently solemnly as possible, "Now that you see the error of your ways, how can I do anything but forgive you." For me, it was the best way to rub it in.

Sure, a lot of the reason that campaign is memorable to me is the comical nature of Markus's failed attempts at treason. But in the process, the character became unforgettable. He stands out in my memory as an individual personality, and, to be honest, he is probably the only reason I remember my own character Jaston, an otherwise completely forgettable figure.

What made the conflict work, of course, was the depth of friendship between me and Jim. Even though his character had been trying to betray mine, I remained confident of Jim's amity toward me. And it was his confidence of my affection toward him that made him feel free to take a chance with the characters. The end result was an intensely gratifying role-playing experience. I highly recommend such treachery between true friends.

❑

*Once, in another campaign, when our group had infiltrated a villain's fortress by hiring on as guards, Jim's PC and another had worked out a wonderful plan to get through a guarded door. Jim's had been assigned to guard the door with an NPC, and he stood polishing his sword so that it would be right at hand when his companion showed up to help take out the NPC guard. The other PC came wandering by, pretending to be drunk, and when the NPC stepped forward to challenge him, Jim's character struck at the poor guard from behind. But in a once-in-a-lifetime series of worst-possible die rolls, he not only missed the guy, he hit his fellow PC instead ... for maximum damage ... and broke his sword off in his buddy's ribs ... thereby killing his compatriot and disarming himself all at once!

The Living Galaxy

Character Bonding, SF Campaigns, and ... TV Shows? Part 1

by Roger E. Moore

Last August, I was on a panel for an RPGA® Network seminar called "The Living Galaxy" (catchy title!) at the 1994 Gen Con® game fair. Among the many questions our panel fielded was one from a Game Master who asked how he could set up a science-fiction role-playing campaign in which the player characters worked together instead of wandering off on their own divergent projects.

The GM had found that his players did not cooperate because their group bonds were so loose. He blamed this in part on the campaign set-up, which threw together beings from all over the galaxy who had nothing in common. Little wonder the players and GM had trouble deciding what to do during a game.

In fantasy games, diverse player characters seem automatically to form adventuring parties to explore dungeons, battle dragons, loot hoards, and so forth. The twin goals of defeating evil opponents and getting rich are shared by almost all PCs. What equivalent common goals (or common ground of any kind) can there be for spacefaring adventurers who don't hail from the same planet or even the same species?

One solution came to me two weeks later (unfortunately long after the seminar was over) as I roamed the exhibition hall of Conadian in Winnipeg, Manitoba, the 1994 WorldCon for science-fiction and fantasy authors and fans. Many dealers there sold collectable items licensed from TV shows, including every version of Star Trek and even 25-year-old shows like Lost in Space and Land of the Giants. (Remember Fireball XL-5? That was there, too.)

A TV series is a lot like a role-playing campaign, I thought. Scriptwriters have to produce not only a world in which the major characters—read "player characters"—act out their adventures, but they must create the adventures as well. GMs could learn something about running a campaign just by watching TV and analyzing what they see. The major characters of a TV series are bonded by their common interests, goals, and environment. They stick together, through thick and thin, thanks to these common—aha! A solution to the GM's problem was clear!

To be fair, I believe that other writers have mentioned before that role-playing campaigns can be constructed along the lines of action/adventure TV shows. I'd like to carry the analogy further and say that for your own personal gaming, you can get ideas for settings, plots, and characters from many sorts of TV shows, even ones that you would think have nothing to do with a science-fiction set-up.

This month and next, we'll look at an assortment of old and new TV shows and see how their themes and concepts can be worked into almost any science-fiction campaign in order to give the characters a strong group bond and ensure they work together on common goals, no matter how unrelated the individual characters appear to be.

But first, a few words on what using a TV-series campaign structure will mean to your playing style.

The TV Series Campaign

The TV shows that follow include those series that had relatively stable character rosters and story lines showing continuity and evolution (sometimes minimally). Great SF shows such as The Twilight Zone or The Outer Limits were not included because they were really anthologies of unconnected tales. TV shows lacking an action/adventure focus were generally also dropped, since nearly all SF role-playing set-ups are founded, in large part, on the swift resolution of interpersonal conflicts by the application of overwhelming firepower. (Quick wits help, yes, but let's be honest here and give the blaster its due.)

Given the above, Bonanza would be an appropriate campaign model even though it wasn't SF at all, since it had regularly appearing characters with common interests, goals, and settings—who sometimes resolved problems using overwhelming firepower. The Mary Tyler Moore Show, with its newsroom setting and lack of combat and chase scenes, would be less appropriate.

If you run an SF campaign using a TV series as a model, you will certainly be under fewer constraints than the producers and writers for a TV show. You can run short, fairly unconnected, one-evening adventures linked only by the presence of the same characters (just like a TV show), or you can run longer, multiple-session "miniseries" adventures. You can even link adventure "episodes" into interrelated adventure chains, as described here in issue #91, and create Dallas-style soap operas by focusing on evolving interpersonal relationships.

Everything changes, of course. The cast of characters in your group might vary over time (as happened on M*A*S*H and Lassie), the setting you once thought permanent might change drastically (as happened on Lassie and All in the Family/Archie Bunker's Place), and characters' goals and occupations might change as well (as happened on Ohara during its three seasons).

If you want more information on a particular TV series listed here, you have several options. First, an excellent reference to consult is The Complete Directory to Prime Time Network TV Shows, 1946-Present, by Tim Brooks and Earle Marsh (Ballantine Books, 1992). This huge, award-winning masterwork describes an enormous number of shows in brief, concise terms. This volume gave me an incredible number of ideas for SF campaigns and adventures. Your local library or bookstore might have a wide variety of other TV-related books, some focusing on particular shows while others span the variety offered by all the networks.

Second, by all means watch TV shows that interest you. Check the tower-broadcast, cable, and satellite TV listings in your newspaper or in TV Guide. Many "extinct" TV shows, some over 40 years old, appear in reruns across the U.S. and elsewhere. An episode or two of *The Rockford Files* or *Quantum Leap* might give you plenty of thoughts about how to build your next series of SF adventures.

Third, you may be able to find mail-order companies dealing with "media fandom" and get more information that way. Many TV shows have loyal follow-

ers, as all you Trekkies and Whovians well know. Some small-press companies offer episode compendiums for shows like *Lost in Space, The Man from U.N.C.L.E.,* or *The Wild Wild West.* Others have deck plans for every sort of spacecraft in the *Star Trek* and *Battlestar Galactica* universes. (At the WorldCon in Winnipeg, I saw officially approved deck plans for the submarine *Seaview,* from the show *Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea.*) Booths catering to media fandom appear at many SF/F conventions; check to see if a convention in your area might have such items.

Want to do your own research? Just watch TV—with a notebook and pencil in your lap. Pay attention to the type of action and plots that different shows present. Note which settings would work best in your campaign. Jot down descriptions of interesting villains and nonplayer characters. Look up listings of shows in *TV Guide* and recall your favorite past TV episodes. Look for valuable elements even in "dumb" shows like *Gilligan's Island.* Before long, you'll have a ton of material to jam into your role-playing sessions, all fresh from the boob tube.

Author's note: Although the proper style for writing the title of a TV show is to use quotes, I've switched to italics since so many shows are involved and space is limited. Also, I was rather liberal at times in categorizing "Mundane" and "SF" shows; most fantasy shows were put in the "SF" group, and most ultramodern and high-tech shows went into "Mundane." "Synd." means the show was syndicated; "n/d" means no show dates are available. I did not list rerun dates, and I'm sure I've missed a few good shows that readers will later tell me about, but this should be complete enough for most gamers' needs.

Mobile Home Base

Mundane Models: *Convoy* (NBC 1965), *The Love Boat* (ABC 1977-1986), *The Mississippi* (CBS 1983-4), *Mr. Roberts* (NBC 1965-6), *Operation Petticoat* (ABC 1977-9), *The Queen & I* (CBS 1969) *Riverboat* (NBC 1959-61), *The Silent Service* (synd. 1956-8), *Supercarrier* (ABC 1988), *The Wackiest Ship in the Army* (NBC 1965-6).

SF Models: *Battlestar Galactica* (ABC 1978-80), *Blake's 7* (BBC 1978-81), *SeaQuest DSV* (NBC 1994-now), *Space: 1999* (synd. 1975-7), *Star Blazers* (animated, synd. n/d), *Star Trek* (NBC 1966-9), *Star Trek: The Next Generation* (NBC 1987-94), *Star Trek: Voyager* (NBC 1995-now), *Supertrain* (NBC 1979), *Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea* (ABC 1964-8).

Characters: All major characters are crewmen or long-term passengers aboard a large, mobile vessel with a very broad range of operations. The characters might leave the vessel for short periods of time, but the vessel is essentially both their home and work place. Characters are usually employed by a single agency or several cooperative agencies, all attempting to accomplish shared goals (exploration, military missions, passenger/freight transport, pleasure cruising, etc.) despite any day-to-day interpersonal conflicts that develop.

You may want to scream at the comparison of *The Love Boat* to *Star Trek,* but the similarity becomes clear with a little thought.

Shared Goals: Accomplish your employer's mission by working with your teammates, all the while maintaining the vessel's security and your group's existence.

Setting: As noted above, a large, mobile vessel is the main setting for this sort of campaign. The vessel must be large enough to offer a range of environments (even if they are in small rooms) suitable for playing out adventures. To prevent boredom in such a restricted environment, the vessel's travels take it and its crew for short visits to many distant and exotic locations, some of them dangerous.

Commentary: *The Love Boat? Operation Petticoat?* You may want to scream at the comparison of these two shows to *Star Trek,* but the similarity in the series structures becomes clear with a little thought. All essentially reflect the "Big Ship" campaign idea that's been discussed in this column several times before (see POLYHEDRON® issue #90 in particular). I won't cover it in great depth here as a result, but would like to touch on a few new ways of looking at these series and those like them.

The missions ("game adventures") of the Big Ship's crew can be introduced during a routine or special exploration session, as the results of orders from their commanders, or on the initiative of the major ("player") characters themselves. The different skills and personalities of the characters are important to resolving an adventure, so the more diverse the group of characters, the better the episode ("game session"). No matter what their differences, all crewmen share clear and common goals. Defining and reworking all characters to fit this campaign style must take place before the campaign begins—as the characters are being rolled up, if possible.

Note the differences as well as the similarities between the TV shows in this category. Several shows were about submarines, which can be compared to spacecraft in many ways—as was noted in this column in issue #90. (*Operation Petticoat* was a comedy series about the World War II voyages of a U.S. Navy submarine that was accidentally painted pink, and *The Silent Service* was a documentary series on American WWII submarine warfare.) One show was about a modern aircraft carrier, one was about a high-speed train, one about an ocean liner, and two (you can guess which) were about river boats. Obviously, you don't need to go into outer space to have adventures somewhat similar to those of Captain Kirk. A huge overland vehicle or an aircraft like the U.S. president's "Doomsday" 747 would also serve well here as the "vehicle" for the campaign.

Less obvious differences also exist. In *Blake's 7,* the heroes are simply rebels on the run from a tyrannical government; their adventures were thus much less structured than those on *Star Trek.* Character types were also more varied, and common threads binding them were reduced to a shared home and a shared threat. In *Star Blazers* (the TV version of the anime series *Space Cruiser Yamato*), the characters are less important than the survival and series continuity of the ship itself, a situation reversed in *Star Trek* once the movies came out. And in *Battlestar Galactica,* numerous other starships traveled with the main ship, though these were smaller and had less critical roles. The whole force was more like a modern carrier battle group, allowing for a wider range of settings and action.

Examples: Again, past installments

of this column have covered the starship-based campaign in some detail; see issues #60-62, 69, 74, and 90. A good example of this appears in GDW's *2300 AD* module *Bayern,* which is about a giant exploration starship that goes to the Pleiades.

A clever GM (possibly armed with the official Seaview deck plans or a book about modern ships or submarines) could create an Earth-based oceanic campaign. A large, unusual passenger or research ship, a warship, or an undersea craft could form the core of a modern or ultramodern *Twilight: 2000, Merc: 2000, GURPS, Cyberpunk 2.0.2.0.,* TOP SECRET/S.I.® *F.R.E.E. Lancers,* AMAZING ENGINE® *Kromosome,* or even *Call of Cthulhu* campaign. ("City of the Deep Ones, dead ahead! Fire all torpedoes!") The greatly distorted set-ups of GAMMA WORLD®, *Rifts, Shadowrun,* and *Torg* campaigns would also make oceanic travel very . . . um, entertaining.

If you want a smaller-scale, inland campaign of this sort, then a riverboat or a mobile home would also serve. A large overland vehicle like that in the movie *Damnation Alley* would work for a post-holocaust RPG. (I keep thinking of the gigantic land crawler/carrier in Larry Elmore's cover for the GAMMA WORLD module GW10 *Epsilon Cyborgs,* taken from an earlier AMAZING STORIES® calendar.) The TV series *Supertrain* was a bomb, but you might make a train-based adventure work. After all, trains did well on *The Iron Horse,* described in next month's section, "The Mobile Business."

Static Community

Mundane Models: *Bret Maverick* (NBC 1981-90), *Here Come the Brides* (ABC 1968-70), *Mayberry R.F.D.* (CBS 1968-71), *M*A*S*H* (CBS 1972-83), *Northern Exposure* (CBS 1990-now), *Petticoat Junction* (CBS 1963-70), *Twin Peaks* (ABC 1990-1). See also many other series, named elsewhere, set in particular cities and having a broad cast of regular characters whose "adventures" are not always limited to a specific theme (e.g., *The Andy Griffith Show/Andy of Mayberry* (CBS 1960-8), *Gunsmoke* (CBS 1955-75), and many soap operas like *Flamingo Road, Knot's Landing,* and *Peyton Place* (see "Soap Opera Family Epic").

SF Models: *Babylon-5* (synd. 1993-now), *SeaQuest* (NBC 1993-4), *Space: 1999* (synd. 1975-7), *The Starlost* (synd. n/d), *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine* (NBC 1992-now).

Characters: The characters in this campaign are often of widely assorted and unrelated backgrounds, with only one important thing in common: They permanently inhabit a large self-contained community (a city, base, or building) in a fixed location. All PCs are thus neighbors and are generally bent on resolving their own personal or business problems while interacting with other characters who are doing the same thing. Adventures tend to come to them, rather than the characters going to the adventures.

Shared Goals: Accomplish your personal and business goals while at the same time maintaining the cohesiveness and security of your community and respecting and assisting with the goals of your neighbors (unless you are uncooperative and your neighbors' goals and methods oppose yours).

Setting: In this set-up, the shared home/business setting is fixed, not mobile. The home could be a dry-land city or colony, an undersea city, or a space station.

In some of these set-ups, the fixed base has very definite limits on its habitability due to the hostile nature of the surrounding environment. Moonbase Alpha from *Space: 1999,* for instance, has much in common with the space stations in *Babylon-5* and *Deep Space Nine.* As great ocean depths can be quite hostile to human life, undersea cities like that on *SeaQuest* are also like Moonbase Alpha, and a floating oceanic city would more resemble a space station in set-up.

A more loosely bound setting would be a city or town with some restrictions on access—on an island or mountain, in a valley, etc. Limiting the setting is merely a way of focusing the adventures and the goals of the characters; too many limits without enough variety will strangle this campaign set-up. In some TV series, characters don't travel around much because they just don't need or want to, but you can't trust PCs to do that!

Commentary: Character types can be more creative and varied than in many other TV models noted here. Merchants, bureaucrats, bums, soldiers, and scientists can live and work together in a loose arrangement, attacking common problems from different angles. Businesses can grow and fade, politicians respond to new challenges, immigrants come and emigrants go, military threats appear on the horizon, and so on. This can be a very rich campaign if allowances are made for variety. (Note that both **Babylon-5** and **Deep Space Nine** include nearby space anomalies that can easily shake up an otherwise dull day.)

It's interesting to look at the TV shows that I didn't include here, and why. I was moved at first to include shows like *Cheers* or *Wings* here, but dropped them because no one lives in a bar or at an airport. Those places thus aren't really homes. I almost included Hotel because the show was about the staff of a very large building in which visitors (and adventures) came and went; *Fawlty Towers* almost got in for the same reason. However, once again, the staff doesn't live in the hotel, and hotels are about as much fun to use as the centers of role-playing campaigns as are hospitals. (Thus all hospital shows were left out, too.)

So why did I leave *M*A*S*H* in? It was set in a mobile field hospital, a small and fairly stable community. Then, too, the main characters were quite varied, and they worked and lived together in their army camp. You can learn a few things about campaign design from watching the show. Still, I doubt that running a doctor-based campaign is a good idea. It isn't exciting and conflict-oriented enough for most gamers, medical terminology and methods are hard to describe in game terms, and you aren't going to "live on the edge" and strike it rich overnight as a surgeon, no matter how good you are. True, the war-zone aspect of *M*A*S*H* led to some "exciting adventures," but that show made it clear that war is no fun at all, and the show's overall theme was very depressing despite its humor.

Will werewolves, steam-powered robots, tyrannosaurs, mutant gila monsters, and cattle-rustling UFOs threaten the Ponderosa?

Examples: TSR's *Metamorphosis Alpha* and AMAZING ENGINE *Metamor-*

phosis Alpha to Omega games are very much Static Community games. Though the starship *Warden* moves, its travels have no effect on its inhabitants, who can't leave the ship. (The Earth moves through space, but it doesn't affect Mayberry, N.C., except to give it a day/night cycle and regular seasons.) *The Starlost* took place aboard a lost generation-travel starship.

A similar situation can develop in any number of deep-space games if a huge space station is designed for gaming use. At various SF conventions, I recall seeing very detailed (if unofficial) deck plans for famous *Star Trek* space stations like Regula 1 and Starbase 79, which are quite large indeed; a huge set of *Deep Space Nine* deck plans will no doubt be out shortly. Interestingly, the old *High Frontiers* RPG took place almost entirely on various space stations in our solar system.

For "open-air" communities, cities will do nicely. For example, look at TSR's BUGHUNTERS® game. The little-described city of New Austin on the planet Acey-Two could be the setting of a very complex series of space-frontier adventures, all relating to the alien menace facing humanity. No matter what sort of PCs are brought into the game, their shared setting of Acey-Two and their common threat will bind them together. The *Traveller, Megatraveller, Traveller: The New Era, Star Wars, Star Trek, GURPS Space,* and *2300 AD* games present many worlds where closely knit cities and colonies could be exciting campaign settings.

Remember Bespin, the cloud city in *The Empire Strikes Back?* There's an interesting community for a *Star Wars* campaign. (Look for the West End Games module.) Aerial cities were also mentioned in the old *Ringworld* game. If such cities don't move around or if their environment isn't solid, as with Bespin, they'll fit this set-up nicely. An asteroid colony or O'Neill-style space colony would also fit into this campaign set-up using the *Traveller: The New Era, 2300 AD, Star Trek,* STAR FRONTIERS®, *Cyberpunk 2.0.2.0.,* or *Star Wars* games.

Undersea cities could be founded in many SF campaigns, ranging from ultra-modern set-ups like *Cyberpunk 2.0.2.0.* and *Kromosome* to far-future, far-away worlds in a *Star Trek* or *Star Wars* game. A floating city on an oceanic world would also work.

Pioneer Family

Mundane Models: *The Big Valley* (ABC 1965-9), *Bonanza* (NBC 1959-73), *Daktari* (CBS 1966-69), *Daniel Boone* (NBC 1964-1970), *Flipper* (NBC 1964-8), *Gentle Ben* (CBS 1967-9), *The High Chaparral* (NBC 1967-1971), *Laramie* (NBC 1959-63), *Lassie* (CBS 1954-71), *Little House on the Prairie* (NBC 1974-83), *Pistols 'N' Petticoats* (CBS 1966-7), *The Rifleman* (ABC 1958-63), *The Roy Rogers Show* (NBC 1951-7), *Sky King* (ABC 1953-4), *Swiss Family Robinson* (ABC 1975-6), *The Waltons* (CBS 1972-81).

SF Models: *Earth 2* (NBC 1994-now), *Lost in Space* (CBS 1965-8).

Characters: Most PCs here are members of a single extended family, with other PCs being various allies, friends, or hired hands. Two closely allied and possibly intermarried families might also be represented. A few PCs roles might be unusually intelligent nonhumans, such as robots, alien creatures, or mammalian pets (see "Exotic Family").

Shared Goals: Maintain your family's survival and growth in a hostile or wilderness environment. If the family maintains a business (e.g., ranching), the business must also be maintained.

Setting: The required setting here is a generally unexplored wilderness or exotic location with a fair degree of danger present, usually in the form of hostile cultures, animals, or weather. The setting is usually sparsely inhabited by "civilized" folk (or else what civilization is present is innately hostile to the settlers), and survival can be a constant concern. Many TV shows listed above are set in the American Old West—a good model for any pioneer-style locale. A deserted island, swamp, tropical savanna, or other isolated region isn't a bad idea, either.

Commentary: *Bonanza* was an enormously popular Western about a father, his three sons, and their cattle ranch (the Ponderosa). Every episode centered around the adventures of the Cartwright family, ranging over every possible theme from high comedy to adventure thriller. Cattle rustlers, gunslingers, hostile Indians, kidnappers, bank robbers, mountain lions, and more had to be faced and fought.

This pattern is largely repeated in many of the above shows. Times may change (the ranchers in *Sky King* used aircraft instead of horses), and the setting may change (the Florida Everglades appears in two of the above shows), but the theme of family unity, survival, and growth against all odds is the same.

An interesting element to watch in any sort of "family" campaign is the interplay between family members. If the gaming group doesn't work well together, family campaigns will be difficult to run, particularly if several players want their characters to head off in different directions every week. The GM will be challenged to add variety in adventures when the setting does not change greatly from session to session; pioneer family campaigns may lack the great variety found in Static Community campaigns.

Note that this theme can be introduced with many twists: a Native American family's survival against the onslaught of white settlers, for instance, might serve as the model for an SF campaign in which Earth is invaded, conquered, and settled by a more powerful alien civilization.

Examples: Several types of colonial-world campaigns were discussed in this column in issues #71 and 90. It would not be difficult to generate pioneer families for alien-world campaigns such as are found in the various *Traveller* game incarnations, or in the *Star Trek, 2300 AD,* BUGHUNTERS, or *Star Wars* games. A post-holocaust Earth, as found in the GAMMA WORLD, *Rifts, GURPS Horseclans, Twilight: 2000, Torg,* or *Shadowrun* games, would challenge any family, no matter how well armed.

And, what the hey, you can always get out your copy of TSR's BOOT HILL® game and make up your own science-fiction Old West family epic, crossing it with oddball elements from comic books, horror novels, SF movies, and TV shows like *The Wild Wild West* or *Brisco County Junior.* Will werewolves, steam-powered robots, tyrannosaurs, mutant gila monsters, and cattle-rustling UFOs threaten the Ponderosa? Only the GM knows for sure.

Exotic Family

Mundane Models: Daktari (CBS 1966-9), *Flipper* (NBC 1964-8), *Gentle Ben* (CBS 1967-9), *The Hathaways* (ABC 1961-2), *Lassie* (CBS 1954-71), *Me and the Chimp* (CBS 1972), *The Rogues* (NBC 1964-5).

SF Models: *The Addams Family* (ABC 1964-6), *ALF* (NBC 1986-90), *Bewitched* (ABC 1964-1972), *Dark Shadows* (ABC 1966-1971), *The Ghost and*

Mrs. Muir (NBC/ABC 1968-70), *The Girl with Something Extra* (NBC 1973-4), *Harry and the Hendersons* (synd. 1990-2), *I Dream of Jeannie* (NBC 1965-70), *Lost in Space* (CBS 1965-8), *Mister Ed* (CBS 1961-5), *Mork and Mindy* (ABC 1978-82), *The Munsters* (CBS 1964-6), *My Favorite Martian* (CBS 1963-6), *My Living Doll* (CBS 1964-5), *My Mother the Car* (NBC 1965-6), *My Secret Identity* (synd. 1988-91), *Out of This World* (synd. 1987-91), *The Powers of Matthew Star* (NBC 1982-3), *The Second Hundred Years* (ABC 1967-8), *Small Wonder* (synd. 1985-9), *Starman* (ABC 1986-7), Tabitha (ABC 1977-8), *Topper* (CBS/ABC/NBC 1953-6), *Tucker's Witch* (CBS 1982-3).

Characters: One of two situations is prevalent here. One, a single "normal" human family (with the usual assortment of friends, foes, hired help, and business allies) also includes at least one remarkable nonhuman or highly peculiar human. Two, the family is composed almost entirely of peculiar humans or nonhumans.

A nonhuman family member is usually a normal mammal with extraordinary intelligence, like a dog (*Lassie*), bear (*Gentle Ben*), dolphin (*Flipper*), chimp (*Daktari, The Hathaways, Me and the Chimp*), or horse (*Mister Ed*). (Okay, Mister Ed could talk, so he was more extraordinary.)

The odd member might also be a robot (*Lost in Space, My Living Doll, Small Wonder*), alien (*Mork and Mindy, My Favorite Martian, The Powers of Matthew Star, Starman*), cryptozoological being such as a sasquatch (*Harry and the Hendersons*), human telepath (*The Girl with Something Extra*), magic-user (*Bewitched, Tabitha, Tucker's Witch*), superhero (*My Secret Identity*), or supernatural creature like a genie, ghost, vampire, werewolf, spiritually possessed person, or reincarnated being (*Dark Shadows, The Ghost and Mrs. Muir, I Dream of Jeannie, My Mother the Car, Topper*). In *The Second Hundred Years,* the unusual family member was a normal man who in 1900 was buried in a glacier, then "defrosted" years later to live with his (now aged) son and (same apparent age) grandson.

A nonhuman in a human family often fills a useful "sub-human" role as a big friendly pet, sometimes with side jobs as a children's nanny and family guardian. If on a more even par with humans, the nonhuman still stands out, often obnoxious and meddlesome but still helpful in the main as a troubleshooter or teacher (Alf and "Uncle Martin," for example). In many cases, the nonhuman is vastly more powerful than any human, and interesting power-sharing arrangements must be worked out (such as between Darren and Samantha Stevens, or Tim and his "Uncle Martin").

A few examples above include families almost entirely composed of nonhumans or strange humans, such as the Addams family and the Munsters. (Only one of the Munsters could be considered a normal human, and all of the Addams family members were strange beyond words.) Two interrelated families of eccentric thieves appeared in The Rogues. Three of the five Hathaways were chimps, and several of the Stevens family and its in-laws were witches. Obviously, the weirder the family, the more conflicts it will experience with its local community—and the more interesting the game scenarios!

For variety, it is worth looking at intelligent nonhumans featured in other TV series, even if they weren't part of any families. For instance, there was a crime-fighting "smart car" named KITT (*Knight Rider,* NBC 1982-6), an orangutan who was a government consultant (*Mr. Smith,* NBC 1983), a dog that helped an Old West U.S. Army outpost (*The Adventures of Rin Tin Tin,* ABC 1954-9), another dog that helped people as it wandered the world (Here's Boomer, NBC 1980-2), a dolphin "ensign" at an undersea base (*SeaQuest,* NBC 1993-4), and an aquatic Atlantean working with humans on undersea projects (*The Man from Atlantis,* NBC 1977-8). I've deliberately left out most of the superheroes, though TV has had lots of them. *My Secret Identity* was one of the few superhero TV shows to integrate family problems into the life of the superhero (in this case, a teenage boy).

Shared Goals: Maintain your family's goals and cohesiveness with the added stressor of the inclusion of an intelligent nonhuman (possibly you) as a recognized and close part of your family unit. Alternatively, do the above with almost everyone in the family being a nonhuman or weird human.

Setting: This type of campaign does not necessarily require any special sort of setting; it can take place almost anywhere that the family calls home. Since most of the action and interaction in family shows of this type occurs within the family itself, the setting is often mundane, with suburban homes predominating. (Normal people's reactions to peculiar families make for good comedy.) The family is considered weird enough to generate its own adventures.

More interesting (i.e., dangerous) settings are typical of the Pioneer Family model mentioned earlier: Western-style wilderness, African savanna, unexplored planets, post-disaster Earth, etc. These are recommended for role-playing campaigns, which thrive on greater amounts of action than TV's situation comedies.

Commentary: An Exotic Family campaign doesn't really restrict the range of adventures possible to the group unless the family settles down. This campaign can be crossed with the Static Community campaign to duplicate most of the above TV-show situations, but a cross between the Exotic Family and Mobile Home Base campaign could be quite lively. Think of the old *Lost in Space* show, for instance, or a peculiar family living aboard a large merchant/exploration starship that roams the galaxy.

One problem in running an Exotic Family campaign might be that everyone will want to be an exotic character.

The Ravens Bluff Trumpeter

ADVENTURERS' EXTRA!

Slug Warning

Reports by both the City Watch and mayor O'Kane's office warn that several giant, subterranean slugs have recently been seen in our fair city. A representative from the Ministry of Art tells the Trumpeter that such slugs are commonly found miles below the earth, and that their appearance above ground is puzzling. Sergeant Hervor of the City Watch has reported encountering several of these disgusting creatures, and although they appear harmless, they are actually deadly menaces.

Nort Snadlacker of the City Morgue says, "The spittle of these slugs can dissolve a man in seconds—a horrifying sight! It's going to take plenty of overtime to identify the guardsmen slain by these monsters."

The mayor's office has apparently taken the problem from the hands of the City Watch, and adventurers may be called in to handle the problem.

Plague of Frogs

In related news, an unusually large and active mass of frogs has appeared in uptown Ravens Bluff. Sources indicate that the amphibians appear to come from within or near the mansion of the renowned wizard Ren, a long-time resident of the city. Trumpeter reporters have been dispatched to interview the esteemed Ren, and you can read their findings here in the next regular issue of the Trumpeter.

Employment Opportunity

Jack Mooney, proprietor of the Mooney & Sons Circus, wishes to acquire several carnivorous apes to add to his establishment's attraction. Adventurers interested in dangerous but rewarding employment should inquire at the circus.

RPGA Network members attending this year's WINTER FANTASY® convention may face these and other adventures! Look for *Slug Fest*, by James Alan, *The Mansion of the Mad Wizard Ren*, by James M. Ward, and *An Ape for Mr. Mooney*, by Jean Rabe at WINTER FANTASY and other Network-supported conventions.

Pentecon VII, March 31-April 2 Ithaca, NY—Join us for 47 hours of gaming fun! The convention will feature AD&D game, RPGA Network sanctioned events, *GURPS, SFB*, various war games, and ever-present *Magic: The Gathering*. Our regular fiction, art, and miniature contests will be held. For further details contact: Kristin Mayo, 219 Willard Way, Ithaca, NY 14850, or by e-mail at pentecon@cornell.edu.

Gold Con V, April 15 Clark, NJ—This one-day fest will be held at the American Legion Post on Westfield Ave. RPGA Network events include two AD&D games and two Living City scenarios. Play *Magic: The Gathering, Space Hulk, Talisman, Civilization*, and *Axis & Allies*. Write: Gold Con, 3 Foursome Dr., Marlboro, NJ 07746.

Cruise Con, April 27-30—The Ultimate Role-Playing Experience Awaits! Three days, three nights on Carnival's luxury liner, the *Fantasy*. 1st-Class gaming, theme scenarios, paragon-level events, Network tournaments, Living City, and much more. Visit the islands with our low-priced package deals. Don't miss this once-in-a-life-time convention! Guests of honor: Jean Rabe, Darwin Bromley, and Wizards of the Coast representatives. For more information, call: 216-673-2117.

SpringCon '95, April 28-30 Lincoln, NE—Join us for the fifth annual SpringCon. Featured events include a miniatures painting contest, Warhammer 40K, BattleTech, Fantasy Battles, and many others. Network-sanctioned events include *Amber*, Living City, Living Jungle, AD&D game Paragon, AD&D game Grandmasters, *Paranoia*, and others. For more info, write: SpringCon, c/o Spellbound, 16th & W, Lincoln, NE 68501.

DemiCon VI, May 5-7 Des Moines, IA—Looking for a little magic? 24-hour gaming? Come to Iowa's premier sci-fi con. Filking, masquerades, art shows, guests, Network events, and more. For information write: The Adventurers of Central Iowa, 1304 Boyd St., Des Moines, IA 50316 or phone 515-266-2358.

CONtario, June 3-4 Toronto, ON—We are proud to present a large selection of Network events, including new Living City events, a benefit event, a masters event, and Virtual Seattle. Also featured are the Canadian AD&D Team Championship, various Magic tournaments, a Vampire interactive, and a BattleTech Bloodname tournament. CONtario will be held at the Triumph Howard Johnson on Keele Street (at Highway 401). Registration is $8/day or $12/weekend before April 1. For more information, write to: CONtario, 222 The Esplanade, Suite 431; Toronto, ON, Canada, M5A 4M8, or call: (416) 360-8395.

Ben Con '95, June 23-25 Denver, CO—The first gaming convention devoted to charity! Features include an art show, games auction, seminars, dealers' room, a *Magic: The Gathering* room, RPGA Network events, a Vampire ball and blood drive, *Call of Cthulhu, Shadowrun, Earthdawn*, M:tG tournaments, war, board, and miniatures games, and much more! Non-gaming events, too, so bring the whole family! Margaret Weis is the guest of honor with M:tG artists, game designers, and a few surprise guests also in attendance. Located at the Sheraton Hotel in Lakewood, discounted room rates are available for convention-goers. Call (800) 325-3535 to reserve a room, and be sure to mention Ben Con. For additional convention info, contact: Ken Ritchart, 1024 Sagebrush Way, Louisville, CO 80027, or call (303) 665-7062. Ask about VIP registrations.

Grand Game Con 95, July 15 & 16 Grand Rapids, MI—Godfrey Lee Middle School, 1335 Lee Street, SW. We are having the following events: RPGA Network events (Living City, Living Jungle, Virtual Seattle, *Shadowrun*, AD&D Game and AD&D Masters), AD&D Game, GURPS, *Battletech, Rifts, Magic:The Gathering* (sanctioned), *Jyhad, Star Wars, Call of Cthulhu, Shadowrun*, and much more. Doors open at 8 a.m. Events begin at 9 a.m. Admission is $8 for one day, $15 for two. For info or to judge, contact: Leon Gibbons, 13910 Olin Lakes Road, Sparta, MI 49345-9524. ❑